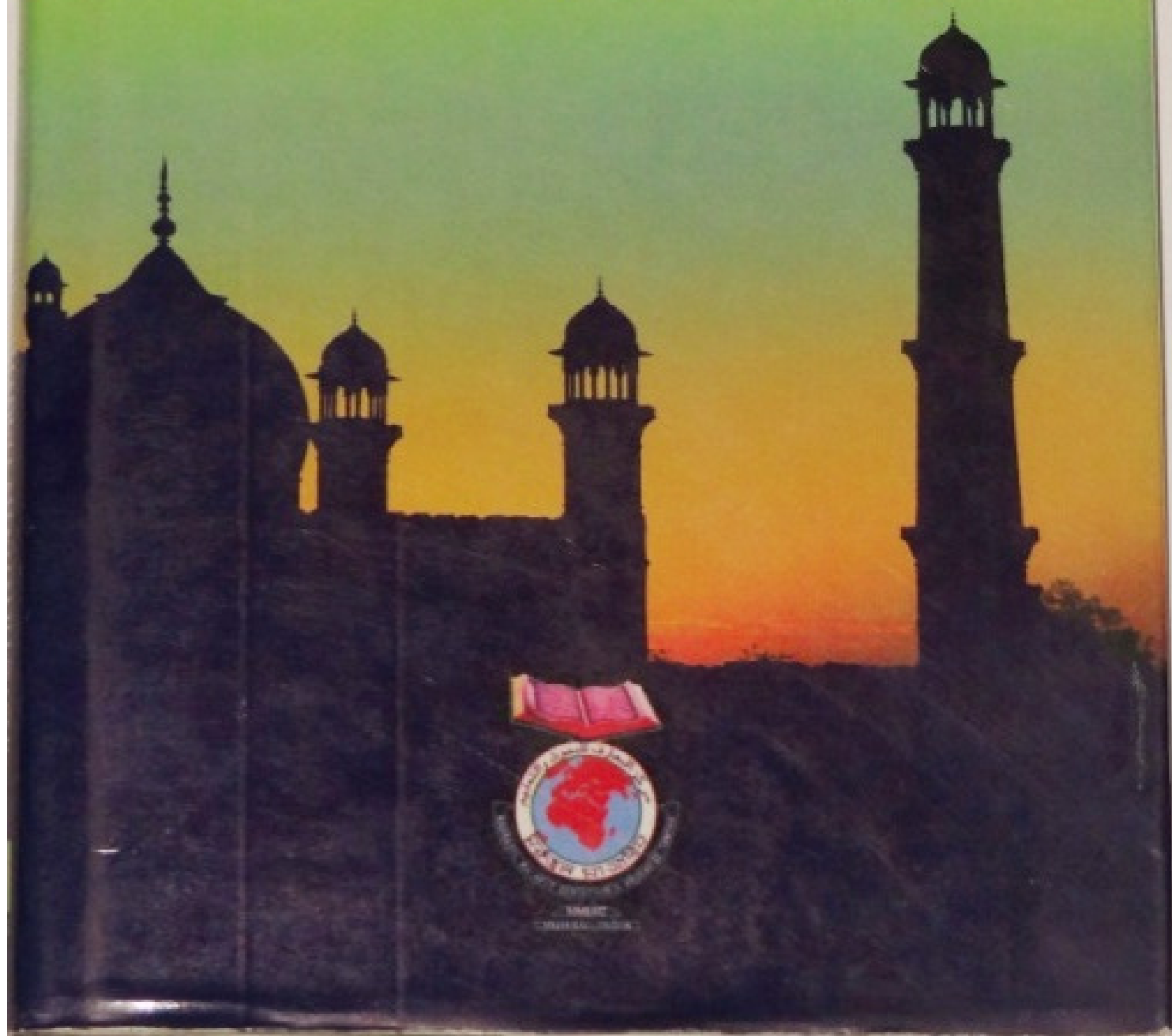


# Madrasa Education

Its Strength and Weakness

MUHAMMADULLAH KHALILI QASMI



**Madrasa Education: Its Strength and Weakness** is a brilliant work done on the subject. As the book deals with the history of madrasas through ages it discusses the burning issues like fundamentalism, terrorism, syllabus and curricula of madrasas. The author being a madrasa product himself was duly able to present the reality. This is, undoubtedly, a tremendous effort of the young author that beckons a brighter future for him. The book shall stand out to be a new kind of vision throwing light on madrasas from a different angle.

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**MADRASA  
EDUCATION**  
Its Strength  
and  
Weakness

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# MADRASA EDUCATION

## Its Strength and Weakness

Compiled by  
Muhammadullah Khalili Qasmi

Published by



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## FOREWORD

*In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

Due to the emergence of strong Taliban movement in Afghanistan, Madrasa and its curriculum has become the focus of attention today. It is however not the first time that Madrasa education has come under severe scrutiny and censor by the colonial and hegemonic powers rather Madrasas have been tested many a times in the past.

Charges leveled against 'Madrasa education' today are numerous and varied. Broadly, however, they are:

- (i) Madrasa education promotes 'medieval attitude' among Muslims at the cost of 'secular education'.
- (ii) 'Orthodoxy and religious conservatism remain the main focus of Madrasa education'.
- (iii) Madrasa Education puts greater emphasis on 'theological aspect' of Islam in curriculum and ignores the 'rational sciences'.
- (iv) It plays the prominent role in keeping the 'movement of Muslim separatism' alive and;
- (v) Mada'ris are 'factories of terror' and 'dens of obscurantism'.

Scholars who have leveled these charges against Madrasa education have mercifully noted the truth that "Madrasa is an institution of learning where Islamic sciences including literary and philosophical ones are taught." It won't be out

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of place to add here the historical facts that the same Madrasa education that is being maligned today of promoting 'medieval attitude' at the cost of 'secular education' and operating as 'factories of terror' and 'dens of obscurantism' has produced stalwarts in the past such as Jabir Ibn Haiyan (Geber – the father of Chemistry), Abu Al-Qasim Al-Zahravi (Albucasis – the father of modern Surgery), Ibn Al-Haitham (Alhazen – the father of Physics, Optics and Mathematics), Ibn Sina (Avicenna – the father of Medicine), Ibn Khaldun (the father of Sociology and Political Science) and scores of other Muslim luminaries who illumined the hearts of their disciples with knowledge of 'rational sciences', many among them were those who came from Europe to learn it. And this was in an era when the entire Europe and the West were submerged in the darkness as far science and scientific education was concerned.

"Why Madrasa around us now days have failed to produce such luminaries?", this is a pertinent question that Muslim Ulama and intellectuals must deliberate and try to answer it. However, the answer and the truth don't lie in one liner "due to the lack of secular education" as often voiced by the adversary of Madrasa education. In fact, the question in itself is a subject of vast research that may consume months or even years.

However, the important among the reasons that could be forwarded for the failure of Madrasa education in recent times is the political hegemony (directly or through surrogates) of the West over the Muslim world. The defeat of Mughals in India at the hands of East India Company and the subsequent defeat of Turkish Khilafat at the hands of European powers crippled the indigenous 'Madrasa' and its educational curriculum in Muslim countries. The colonial masters have purposely thrust alien thoughts, culture, language and educational curriculum upon unwilling

Muslims as an alternative. Muslims were asked to take the colonial educational package wholly or leave it. As a proud nation they left it.

They left it because they found the approach of Western thoughts and education materialistic to the core whereas the upbringing of the Muslim society is on religious and spiritual plane. They also left it because the 'Secular education' (Western education) considers this world as the beginning and the end of the human story, whereas the 'Madrasa education' (Islamic education) considers this world as "a farm to harvest in the Hereafter."

I feel immense pleasure in writing these words because Muhammadullah Muhammad Khalili Al-Qasmi is the fruit of the tree of our own garden 'Markazul Ma'arif Education and Research Centre (MMERC)' that we planted in the year 1994 in Delhi when the nation was in great need and ever since we have been assiduously watering and nursing it. I have great hope from these Researchers of MMERC, Mumbai that they would continue contributing in the field of Islamic education and research. I pray to Allah (SWT) that Maulana Muhammadullah Muhammad Khalili Al-Qasmi and his fellow researchers at MMERC, Mumbai be rewarded for their hard work and this book, in your hand, be beneficial equally for all of us- *Ameen*.

*Wassalam*

(Maulana) Mohd. Badruddin Ajmal Al-Qasmi  
Chairman

Markazul Ma'arif Education and Research Centre (MMERC),  
Mumbai Member Majlis-e Shoura

Darul Uloom Deoband, UP, India

Date: January 1, 2005

## INTRODUCTION

Before venturing in to the main discussion, let's first of all have a bird's eye view on the topic itself. The word 'madrasa' is an Arabic word, which is originated from Arabic word Darasa. Darasa means "to tell something" or "to teach something". The word madrasa means "the place where something is taught." The word school in English also carries the similar meaning, so the word madrasa actually means "school." The madrasa is similar to the church school. In both places, religious education is taught and people go there for praying and studies of religion. Madrasas impart education to Muslim children. Unlike public schools and universities, madrasas have no concept of co-education. There are separate madrasas for men and women.

The primary aim of the madrasas is to produce individuals imbued with the Islamic worldview and outlook to life. They will be equipped with a competent and authentic knowledge of Glorious Qur'an and Hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad Sallahu Alaihi Wasallam), which finds its expression in all aspects of their practical lives. These individuals will be expected to be the torchbearers of Islamic knowledge, carrying its light to people from all walks of life, at every opportunity, in all circumstances, for the sake of Allah. To impart a sound knowledge of Islam, with an understanding of the practical implications of its teachings in the contemporary world and to equip students with the ability to invite others to Islam in a peaceful and non-aggressive manner.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

Madrasas through ages have been the backbone of Muslim community. From the bright Muslim era to these gloomy days in the history of Islam, madrasas have played tremendous role protecting the religious and cultural legacy of Muslim Ummah. In India, after 1857 when the state-funded madrasas and Ulama were targeted by the alien British government and traditional learning places were fully destroyed some gallant Muslims rose from Deoband soil who established a madrasa from the donation of poor Muslims. This madrasa later shaped into a movement that revived Islam in the Indian subcontinent.

Madrasas have always been under attack of extremists in past days. Nevertheless, with the rise of Taliban movement in Afghanistan madrasas came in to lime light. Meanwhile, the deadly attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon (US) on 9th September 2001 diverted the attention of world to madrasas since those who were held responsible for the attacks were harboured by the Taliban regime. Though, the attackers were, interestingly, the products of universities in the Europe and US, but the Taliban movement comprised of people who were educated at madrasas in Pakistan and took pride in attributing them to Darul Uloom Deoband, the mother of madrasas in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This provided the fanatics opportunity to fling mud on madrasas and specially Darul Uloom Deoband. National and



international media left no stone unturned to malign the image of madrasas. These learning centres that were the torchbearer of national integrity and freedom fighting were labeled as dens of terrorism and breeding ground for extremism.

Undoubtedly, there was an ordinary fraction in the media, which now and then used to throw light on the reality of these baseless accusations against madrasas, but these were like drops in the ocean. There must be people who, no doubt, are peace-loving and realistic; they are able to separate the false from the truth. But the majority of them are under the influence of media. Unfortunately, whatever the media says people are used to believe it. This created misunderstandings in the minds of the majority of people and they started looking at madrasas with suspicion.

Likewise, there was already a debate going on in the circle of Muslim scholars and intellectuals to change the madrasa syllabus and adapt it to the modern requirements. The above-mentioned reasons fuelled this ongoing debate and made it an international issue.

Therefore, it was dire need of the hour to reveal the truth before people and check the rumours floating in the air. There were many people from different classes of the society who would express their views and ideas regarding madrasas. But, interestingly many of them have never been to a madrasa even for a single day. They based their entire information on hearsay and the shallow reports of the media that often repeated half-truth. Markazul Ma'arif Education and Research Centre (MMERC), Mumbai has always realized this fact very seriously and is committed to address such issues. It is a pioneering institute of the Indian subcontinent which aims at equipping the madrasa graduates with English language and modern tools of learning. MMERC selected a few of its students for thorough research on some burning

topics. Fortunately, madrasa education was one of them and I was assigned to do study on the topic.

While searching for materials I explored the Urdu books of Ulama from India and Pakistan, and also the writings of scholars and intellectuals. Apart from the history of madrasa, I concentrated to discuss matters that are most sought-after. Instead of imposing my own views I tried to pick up extracts from different places. For example, there are two extreme opinions regarding madrasa syllabus. On one side, there are some who want the madrasas to include subjects like science, mathematics, geography, information technology and other modern subjects. While on the other side, there are some who are suspicious of every suggestion coming from scholars and intellectuals. They insist to live in their own world and reject every constructive advice. As the former view is contrary to the spirit and sense of madrasas, the later is as fatal as it could be. The truth is in between. Similarly, there was need to, thoroughly, analyze the reports of increase in number of madrasas and their link to terrorism.

I am greatly thankful to the president of Markazul Ma'arif, India, Maulana Badruddin Ajmal Al-Qasmi (Member of Advisory Board of Darul Uloom Deoband) whose brain worked in shaping of MMERC. Maulana Burhanuddin Qasmi, Director MMERC, Mumbai and Mr. Hasan Imam have tried their level best to guide and provide atmosphere to accomplish the task. On this auspicious occasion I should not forget my father Qari Abduslam Muztar, a known Islamic poet and pious figure of Hanswar (Faizabad, UP), whose midnight supplications and encouragements enabled me to offer this humble peace of work. Many thanks to Mr. M P Yadav of Manak Publications and Anwar Hussain whose day night efforts played key role in bringing this book to the stage of publication.



Finally, I must not claim that this work, which was done within a span of short period, is complete. There must be many things to be corrected and modified. Therefore, for all shortcomings whatsoever, I am alone responsible and readers may contact me, directly, for any mistake or suggestion.

Wasslam

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Date: 01/03/2005

# 1

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MADRASAS

*In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

### **Education in Islam**

In the contemporary world, education being the most important and essential thing for people, is considered to be a gift of this modern age whereas eventually it is only the Glorious Qur'an to which goes the credit of education's foundation and its boundless advancement.

It is an established truth that Islam has attached much emphasis on education. It is only Islam, which occupies this distinguished position of being the messenger of knowledge and leader of an educational revolution. According to Islamic viewpoint, the humanity set out for its journey in the light of knowledge, not in the darkness of ignorance as many civilized people say that man is a developed form of animals. Other systems have put education in the category of necessities of life but Islam has regarded it the utmost necessity of human life.

There is neither a religion nor a civilization that has termed education as basic right of every individual in the society. Greece and China have made extraordinary progress in the field of education and art but they also could not favour

the education for all. Plato also dreamt of democracy and equality, but he could not go beyond education for some particular segments of the society. In India, which once was the centre of education and art, a lower caste person was not even allowed to hear the Vedic scriptures. If sometimes a lower caste person happened to gain a hearing he used to be forced to get melted lead in his ears. As if it was a heinous crime for him to listen the Vedic verses.<sup>1</sup> None can deny the glory of Nalanda and Takshila universities, but after all, the fact is that the common people were always deprived of education in Hindu periods. Education was only the monopoly of higher castes and classes of the society.

When the sun of Islam was enlightening the world, Europe was passing through dark ages of history. The scientists, artists and men of learning were tortured and sometimes even they were torched to death. The Churches were rulers where life was a second name of wildness. Similarly, ignorance was prevailing all over Arabia. There was neither a school nor a college and a library. Not only that the entire tribes were illiterate but also some of them used to feel proud of being unlettered. Allama Bilazari has written that Quraish, the head of all tribes in Arabia, had only 17 persons who knew writing. Those who were assigned to write the revelation they also were 43 out of all Ansar and Muhajireen (the companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him). In this situation, imagine, whatever Islam has done is nothing short of a miracle.<sup>2</sup>

In 570 (AD), when the sun of Islam rose from the horizon of Arabian Peninsula in its fullest blaze, the entire world was shrouded by darkness and steeped in ignorance and long slumber. The first slogan that Islam chanted in this horrible atmosphere was about 'education'. The earliest verses that revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) invited people to education:

1. *Islami Nizam-e-Zindagi*, p. 241.

2. *Ibid*, p. 240.

Read in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher Who created.  
Created man out of a (mere clot of congealed blood. Read  
and thy Lord is Most Bountiful. He, Who taught (the use  
of) the pen. Taught man that which he knew not.<sup>3</sup>

These five verses of the Holy Quran along with many others are considered to be fountainhead of education in post-Islamic history. They created a remarkable eagerness towards education and filled the followers of Islam with a tremendous spirit that carved a new history.

Education has always received great weightage in the Islam religion. The religion emerged in the barren Arabian lands that were both culturally and socially backward. Thus education was put forward as the lamp to illumine darkness. The main theological text is the Koran, where the word 'Ilam' is used, which means knowledge. It is the second largest word used in the Koran.<sup>4</sup>

The Glorious Qur'an and Hadith encouraged this spirit and gave it a good push by repeated mentioning of education's virtues and greatness like:

- ❖ "Allah will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you believe and who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is well acquainted with all ye do."<sup>5</sup>
- ❖ "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?"<sup>6</sup>
- ❖ "Ulama are the heirs of the Prophets."<sup>7</sup>

3. *Sura Alaq Quran*, Vol. 96, pp. 1-5.

4. Moinul Hassan (2002), "Madrasa Education: Present Scenario & the Muslim Community", *Feature*, 25 March, Kolkata, [www.ganashakti.com](http://www.ganashakti.com).

5. *Sura Mujadila Quran*, Vol. 58, p. 11.

6. *Sura Zumur Quran*, Vol. 39, p. 9.

7. Abudaud & Tirmizi, referred by *Ihya-ul-uloom*, Urdu translation, p. 30.



- ❖ An A'alim is the trustee of Allah on this earth."<sup>8</sup>
- ❖ One who covers a way in search of knowledge Allah will lead him to the paradise."<sup>9</sup>

The Glorious Qur'an has laid much importance to 'education', that is why it regarded the education as the main purpose of the Prophet's advent in this world. As it says at numerous places, such as in Sura Juma:

It He Who has sent amongst the unlettered an apostle from among themselves to rehearse to them His signs, to sanctify them and to instruct them in scripture and wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest error.<sup>10</sup>

This is the reason that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) himself said, I was sent down as a 'teacher'. Once upon a time the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw some of his Companions sitting in to two circles. One circle was busy chanting the glory of Allah and the other was busy in learning and teaching. So the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I was sent as teacher and sat among them.<sup>11</sup>

The Prophet (pbuh), on the one hand, described education as obligatory on every individual while on the other, he asked each Muslim to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong according to the instructions of the Qur'an:

You are the best of the people evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah (swt).<sup>12</sup>

In this way he proclaimed that every believer should be a teacher of his brothers.

8. *Ihya-ul-Uloom*, p. 34, *Ibn-e-Abdulbarr*.

9. *Muslim*, *Ihya-ul-Uloom*, p. 35.

10. *Sura Juma Quran*, Vol. 66, p. 2.

11. *Ibn-e-Maja*, Bab-u-Fazl-il-Ulama.

12. *Sura Aal-e-Imran Quran*, Vol. 3, p. 110.

The above-mentioned verses of the Holy Qur'an have laid down such a natural, easy and cheaper system that had made, unconsciously, the education free and compulsory. Every Muslim family turned into a primary school and each person became its teacher. The first school of a child is a mother's lap where it is inculcated manners, habits and mental approach. That is why one finds the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) and their successors strived hard to get education, travelled over mountains and deserts and exposed them to countless hazards and hardships. Whenever they went engaged themselves in learning and teaching the people. They sat in a corner of a mosque or in a part of a house teaching wisdom and good behaviour. Due to these valuable efforts, in a short period of time, the Arabs turned into the most civilized nation, and wherever they went left their deep impressions on life, culture and language.

### Learning Places in Early Days of Islam

The history furnishes records that Muslims have established schools when the sapling of Islam was putting fourth its tender leaves on the soil of Makka. In early days of Islam in Makka, the house of *Abu Bakr*, *Arqam*, *Fatima Bint Khattab Raziallah-u-anhu* (may Allah be pleased with them) and the *Abu Talib* Valley were used as underground places of education where the converts were taught Islam.<sup>13</sup>

When the Prophet (pbuh) was in his way to Medina during his migration journey, he had to stay for some days in Quba, a town near Medina. He built there a mosque that was named in the Holy Quran as *Masjid-e-Taqwa*. After he settled down in Medina, the first thing he did was the building of a mosque. In the neighbourhood of *Hadhrat Abu Ayyub Ansari* where the Prophet (pbuh) stayed, there was a house belonging to adult orphans. Though the orphans happily offered their land for the purpose, but the Prophet

13. *Qazi Athar Mubarakpuri, Khair-ul-Quroon Ki Darsgahein*, p. 11, *Shaikh-ul-Hind Academy, Darul-Uloom Deoband*.



(pbuh) denied taking without any payment. The Prophet (pbuh) along with his dedicated Companions worked for day and night unless the mosque was built.

From that day mosques have acquired great importance in a Muslim locality. Muslims started building mosques that served as schools and a place of learning too. The mosques turned into such an axis around which evolved the entire fabric of Islamic society.

*Masjid-e-Nabvi*, the mosque of the Prophet (pbuh) became the centre of all learning seats of Muslims where the Prophet himself used to teach people. Students from all classes of the society attended the mosque and learnt from him. Still some students were prominent who were named as *Ashab-u-Ssuffa* (the people of terrace). They lived at a terrace that was situated before the mosque and were always in the company of the Prophet (pbuh). They were poor Companions who had nothing to do except learning. They were around 60 to 70 in number at a time while their total number is said to be 400. They had no family to feed and no work to do. While often the Prophet and the other Companions invited them to meal while sometimes they went without food busy in their studies.<sup>14</sup>

### Roles of Mosques in Education

Says an Islamic writer:

Mosque, in an Islamic society, is not only a place of worship but it is an important centre for education and training. Every Muslim visits mosque five times a day and learns punctuality, sense of responsibility, equality and humbleness. The Prophet (pbuh) has made mosques multi-purpose by using it as an educational institution. So later every mosque served as a learning place until madrasas were established separately after four centuries. Although, 90 per cent mosques of Islamic

14. See the details in *Khair-ul-Quroon Ki Darsgahein*, pp. 40 to 108.

world are used as schools too. The Prophet's action to establish *Suffa* (terrace) attached to the mosque was an ideal that was followed by Muslims. The immediate establishment of a mosque after migration indicates that it is a duty of Islamic state to arrange education first for Muslims.<sup>15</sup>

The ideal mosque that was built by the Prophet (pbuh) set some principles for Ummah that guide it to some intelligent ideas that transform a nation into a developed and progressive one.

Due to importance of education the Islamic state, from its inception founded a mosque and madrasa. *Masjid-e-Nabvi* was not merely a worshipping place but, in fact, it was an educational institution. The terrace that stood in front of the mosque served as the hostel of the students. This institution, generally, consisted of about 60 to 70 student. Some prominent Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) used to be the teachers and the Prophet (pbuh) himself was a principal of this institute. *Hadhrat Mua'az Bin Jabal (RA)* managed its financial dealings as if he was a treasurer. The students who graduated from this institution used to be sent to various places of the state. Thus, this grand institution laid the foundation of some below mentioned principles that appeared to be the base of this movement.

- The religious education based on the Holy Quran and Hadith was regarded as the axis of an Islamic syllabus.
- Two objectives seem to emerge, to produce a good Muslim and fulfil the necessities of the Muslim society.

15. Sayed Ataullah Hussaini, *Islami Nizam-e-Zindagi*, p. 250, Taj Company, Delhi.

- Mosques and madrasas were considered as two contemporary education and training centres that never separate.
- It was termed as good habit for the students to adopt some occupation to meet their needs.
- The duty to arrange education for all was laid on the shoulder of Islamic state and to utilize all the resources for the same.

These were some guidelines drawn for educational system in the period the Prophet (pbuh) on which the future systems grew and progressed.

### Mosques as Learning Places

As the ages passed, mosques became centres of education. Every mosque witnessed several *Halqa* (circles), every circle had a number of student, even some times thousands. Those who were self-dependent they would satisfy their needs on their own and those who were poor they would take help from the state's treasure. The Four Islamic Caliphs, e.g., *Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddique*, *Hadhrat Umar Farooque*, *Hadhrat Usman Gani* and *Hadhrat Ali Murtuza*, *Raziaalau anhum* (May Allah be pleased with them) fixed some amount of money as salaries and scholarships for the students as well as the scholars so that they busy themselves in education. This system lasted up to four centuries. Being unlike the today's madrasas, this system was more effective and beneficial. The education spread to the threshold of every Muslim house. We find details about, at least, half million scholars in *Asma-u-Rrijal* (Anthropology or records of personalities) who narrated and taught Hadith in this period. Mosques were the centres of educational activities. The homes of the teachers and monasteries were also used for the same. The teachers had such a powerful prestige in the society that even the kings and princes were bound to attend the classes.<sup>16</sup>

16. *Islami Nizam-e-Zindagi*, pp. 243-244.

Those who folded their knees for learning in the mosque of the Prophet (pbuh) spread all over to teach people. Even some sent by the Prophet himself as teachers to different places as *Hadhrat Muaaz* was sent to Yemen. Later this light that appeared in Madina enlightened the Arabia and crossed to Kufa, Basra in Iraq and Egypt. The Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) journeyed to Syria, Yemen and Makka. There was a resounding of knowledge wherever they landed.

After the Prophet (pbuh) left for his heavenly abode, it was *Hadhrat Umar Farooq* (RA) who paid an exclusive attention toward education. He appointed teachers, established seminaries and prepared copies of the Glorious Quran. He announced prizes to encourage people to learn all around his caliphate that ranged from Egypt to Persia.

*Hadhrat Umar (Raziallah-u-Anhu)* used to get mosques built wherever he conquered any land. He built splendid and spacious mosques in Iraq, Basra and Kufa while separate mosques also were built for every tribe. The Fustat of Egypt, Bait-ul-Muqaddas of Syria and Jamey Umar in Beirut are deathless memories of him. He wrote to the governors of Syria (which included today's Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine too) that they should build mosque in each city of the state. Some historians are of the opinion that the number of mosques built by *Hadhrat Umar* exceeds for thousand. He (RA) appointed Ulama, Islamic jurists and orators to teach Islam in his conquered areas. He gave them salaries so that they can fulfill their job care-freely.<sup>17</sup>

Later, it was *Hadhrat Umar Bin Abdul Aziz's* regime (99-101 AH=717-720 AD) that extended tremendous services to promote education. The education expanded up to every corner of Islamic Caliphate. Makkah, Madina, Ta'if, Kufa, Basra, Yemen, Syria, Egypt, Mosul, Mada'in, Bahrain,

17. Qazi Zain-ul-Aabideen Meruti, *Khilafat-e-Rashida Ka Ahd-e-Zarrien*, pp. 147-148, Darul-Muallifeen, Deoband.



Khurasan and other places were considered to be the centres.<sup>18</sup>

It is noteworthy that the people of early Islamic age have no match in the field of education, love and struggle for knowledge. After the demise of the Prophet (pbuh) there were all about 100,000 Companions who directly saw him and listened Hadith from him. Every one of them was a teacher while many of them were distinguished experts certified by the Prophet himself. Later when the Islamic Caliphate stretched its boundaries the Companions settled themselves into conquered areas. They did not leave even a single city of Islamic world uncovered. According to sources, in Madina only there were thirty thousand Companions while the same number in Arab tribes. In Syria alone there were ten thousand people who had the privilege to see the Prophet (pbuh).

As the area of caliphate widened, the crowd of students too began to increase. The first problem that the Muslims met was the forging of Hadith and attributing it to the Prophet wrongly. The *Muhaddiseen* introduced certain rules to put the Hadith on acid test. These rules are known as '*Asmaur Rijal*', Anthropology. They dealt with each and every detail about the narrator of Hadith. Thus the Ulama of that age have gathered information about half million scholars who were engaged in teaching Hadith. This figure is sufficient enough to prove the educational revolution that was brought about by Islam.

The Caliphs of Umayyad after 661 paid special attention to construct mosques and madrasas attached to them in Damascus. Caliph Abdul Malik built Madrasa in 691. In 750 the Abbasid caliphs also laid great importance to religious institutions. In 825, when Caliph Al-Mutawakkil got Sahira's mosque built he founded there an institution where the people of every age could acquire

18. *Khair-ul-Quroon ki Darsagahain*, p. 15.

various types of knowledge. When Baghdad emerged as a centre of civilization the Caliph Abu Jafar Mansoor constructed some glorious madrasas along with beautiful mosques. Similarly Ahmad Bin Tuloon built madrasas with mosques in Nile valley during 868. No sooner did the Fatmiyeen overtook Egypt in 969 there was an unbroken chain of madrasas beside Mosques.<sup>19</sup>

The Caliph Abu Jafar Mansoor Abbasid (136-158=753-775) shifted plenty of books in Rum to his capital city Baghdad and founded 'Bait-ul-Hikmah' (House of Wisdom). He invited great scholars and arranged their lodge and food along with scholarship. The Caliph Mutazid Billah (died in 289 H.) appointed scholars of every art and got a grand school built for them. So whosoever wished to learn would go to his favourite teacher.

The education in the period of the Prophet (pbuh) was confined to the Quran and Hadith. Though there were some other kinds of things that were learned and taught like arrow throwing, swimming, horse riding and so on. As the requirement of the time increased, there developed a good system. Later when Islam spread throughout Arabia and turned into a power, the Caliphs widened the network to cultural, military, social and political education following the increasing needs. The biggest turning point in the education system took place in the period of Caliph Mansoor when he sent for Greek Philosophy books and established 'Bait-ul-Hikmah' to translate the books into Arabic. From there, Logic, Philosophy and other sciences automatically crept in the contemporary education system.

During the Abbasid period, thousands of mosques and schools were established throughout the Arab empire and the subjects of study were increased to include *Hadith* (the science of tradition), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), philology, poetry, rhetoric and others. In tenth century, in Baghdad

19. *Hindustan Mein Aham Madaris: Aik Survey Report*, p. 8.



alone there were an estimated 3,000 mosques. Fourteenth century Alexandria had some 12,000 mosques, all of which played an important role in education.<sup>20</sup>

But still there used to be no formal separate building as madrasas of our age. As a great Historian of Islam Qazi Athar Mubarakpuri says:

As the Prophet (pbuh) used his mosque as learning centre the Companions and Ulama of Islam after him followed the same track. It lasted up to 2 or 3 centuries. There is no trace of building separate learning centres for students in the history.<sup>21</sup>

### Madrasas Adjacent to Mosques

In the first example of its kind, some rich Muslims built rooms adjacent to mosques for the students in Fass and Undlus (Spain) around 250 A.H. But it was somewhat different from today's madrasa system, because the students used to get education in mosques as usual and only live in the rooms made for them.

The great Muftia (woman Islamic jurist) Fatima Bint Muhammad Bin Abdullah laid the foundation of Qarwin Jamey Masjid in Fass in 245 H. She built chambers around the mosque for the students. This mosque exists today and is considered to be the most ancient university of the Morocco. Her sister Maryam Bint Muhammad Bin Abdullah in the same year built Jamey Undlus and a few rooms for students.<sup>22</sup>

Al-Azhar University of Cairo (Egypt), the most renowned and oldest university of Islamic Studies, in its early days was a mosque with some rooms around specially made to board students. It came into existence in 361 H.

20. "Arab Civilization: Introduction to the Arab World" from [www.alhewar.org](http://www.alhewar.org).

21. *Khair-ul-Quroon Ki Darsagahain*, p. 16.

22. *Ibid.*

The Arab, the unlettered nation turned not only into an educated and advanced one but also it fulfilled the duty of leading the civilized world of that era. Even the Western writers also admit this fact wholeheartedly. The French Orientalist, G Lebon says in his book 'Tamaddun-e-Arab':

Mosques are the axis of Arabs' life. The mosques are not like the churches of Christians only for worship but they serve as a place of meeting and learning beside worshipping.<sup>23</sup>

The mosques are used as learning places too. The smaller ones are as Makatib (seminaries) where children learn while the bigger ones serve as universities. For instance, the famous mosque of Cairo accommodates three hundred teachers and ten thousand students from across Islamic world. The subjects taught over there, beside Quran and Tafseer are mathematics, Aqlidus, astronomy, Sarf, Nahw, literature, Mana, Bayan, Mantiq etc.<sup>24</sup>

The anxiety that Arab showed towards education is a matter of utter surprise. Many nations have advanced like them but hardly any could stand at par with them in this field. Whenever they occupied any city the first work they did was to build mosque and Madrasa. They always had several Madaris in their capital cities.<sup>25</sup>

### Building of Madrasas

It is somehow difficult to point out with certainty that when and where the first separate madrasa was built. According to Hakim Sayyid Abdul Hayee (the former rector of Nadvatul-Ulama Lucknow and father of Maulana Ali Miyan Nadwi) it began in fourth Hijra century. He says:

23. G. Lebon (1936), *Tamaduun-e-Arab*, p. 476, translated by Syyid Ali Belgrami, Maqbool Academy, Lahore.

24. *Tamaduun-e-Arab*, p. 477.

25. *Ibid*, p. 484.

No trace of the formal educational institutions or madrasas, as they later came to be known, is to be found in early days of Islam. The first attempt to bring the study of different branches of learning under a systematic and standardized institution was made in the fourth century after Hijra when such a Madrasa was established in Nishapur.<sup>26</sup>

Another great historian of India, Qazi Athar Mubarakpuri seems to agree with Hakim Abdul Hayee, as he writes:

The mosques were education centres for three and four centuries in Baghdad, Cairo and other cities of Islamic world. The first madrasa, like that of present time, was founded in Nishapur by Shafai Ulama (those who follow the Imam Shafai's fiqh).<sup>27</sup>

He has dismissed the general opinion that the Minister Nizam-ul-Mulk Tusi is the pioneer in this field. According to him, Nishapur had so many madrasas. The Shafai Ulama founded numerous madrasas in the city.

One of the early madrasas is the madrasa of Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi (1030 AD—421 AH) in his capital Ghazni (Afghanistan). He got this madrasa built in 1019—410 adjacent to a beautiful mosque. There was a grand library that had the rarest and most precious books of the time. The Sultan endowed some villages for the expenses of the madrasa. Due to the Sultan's interest in madrasas the other governors and rulers also competed each other in building madrasas. Especially, Sultan Mas'ood, the son of Sultan Mahmood, carved a marvelous history of building madrasas. The author of Tareekh-e-Frishta says: "He got so many madrasas and mosques built in his kingdom that the words fail to describe."<sup>28</sup>

26. Hakim Abdul Hayee, *India during Muslim Rule*, p. 165.

27. *Khair-ul-Quroon Ki Darsegahain*, p. 19.

28. *Tarikh-e-Farishta*, p. 30, Naval Kishore, Lucknow.

The period of Minister Nizam-ul-Mulk Tusi is a bright period of madrasas' history. He established madrasas in every city of eastern Islamic world known as Central Asia and provided students with scholarship, lodge and food. The Madrasas he built were named after him as Madrasa Nizamia.

The Minister his Excellency got orders from Sultan Alp Arsalaan (d. 465 H.) and built madrasas in Baghdad, Balkh, Nishapur, Herat, Asfahan, Basra, Marv, Tabristan, Mosil and every city of Iraq and Khurasan. These madrasas were known as Nizamia. Madrasa Nizamia of Baghdad is the most famous amongst them all. Imam Gazali is a product of it.<sup>29</sup>

The Minister is well-known for his extraordinary contribution and interest in building madrasas.

In 1066 AD, Nizam al-Mulk, a Seljuk vizier, founded the *Nizamiyya Madrasa* in Baghdad which became the forerunner of secondary/college level education in the Arab empire. *Madrasas* had existed long before Nizam al-Mulk, but his contribution was the popularization of this type of school. The *madrasa* gave rise to various universities in the Arab empire and became the prototype of several early European universities. Founded in 969 AD, Al-Azhar University in Cairo preceded other universities in Europe by two centuries. Today it attracts students from all over the world.<sup>30</sup>

The Eastern Islamic world (known as Khurasan, Iran and Iraq which now includes Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazaqistan) has been a grand centre of knowledge and Ulama. The cities like Bukhara, Tashqand, Tirmiz, Shiraz, Samarqand, Marve and so on were teemed with madrasas and education centres. Once this region had the cream Ulama of Islamic world. The curriculum books

29. *Khair-ul-Quroon ki Darsegahain*, p. 20.

30. "Arab Civilization: Introduction to the Arab World" from [www.alhewar.org](http://www.alhewar.org).



and other Islamic works on Quran, Hadith and Fiqh were carried out in this area.

### **Madrasas in Islamic Spain**

Spain in Islamic history is name of a bright and progressed chapter of Muslim's glory and greatness. When, on one side, Baghdad was heading the world, on the other side, Spain's Cordoba and Granada were surging ahead to educational, scientific and cultural advancements leaving the world behind them. Here are some brief extracts from a French writer's translated book, which helps us to some extent to understand the facts about Muslims in the state.

Arab ruled over Spain for seven hundred years. In 756 when Spain witnessed a separate caliphate from Baghdad and its civilization was on peak. Cordova stayed as the chief among the cities of the world. Those days Arabs were extremely fond of knowledge, art and literature. They established madrasas, libraries, mosques and research centres everywhere. Greek books were translated, learned architecture, astronomy, chemistry, medicine and science. They made progress in these fields and discovered lots of things. Arabs were interested in all kinds of art and education. The capital city Cordova was so advanced and developed that it may be compared with any city of today's Europe. They were the torchbearers of knowledge in Spain. Arabs, within a few centuries, turned Spain into head of Europe in education and economics. The Arabs were more mannered, educated and professional than the Christians. Spain had no civilization before Muslims. It was civilized by leaps and bounds in their time and when they left, it declined to the least.<sup>31</sup>

### **Madrasas in Ottoman Caliphate**

On the one hand, when Spain's Islamic empire was at the edge of its collapse, an other grand Islamic empire was rising from the horizon of Asia Minor (Turkey) on the other. It not

31. *Tammaduun-e-Arab*, pp. 338-343.

only treasured the bright traditions of past Islamic regimes but also took them to the peak of glory and splendor. The caliphate stretched out from Morocco to Central Asia and from central Europe to the entire Arabian Peninsula. Let's have a brief look on their educational activities.

The ottoman caliphs not only supervised education but also they were interested enough to establish education system and to advance them. There was a vast network of Islamic seminaries all across the caliphate, which usually were attached to mosques. Qustuntuniya (today's Istanbul), the capital of caliphate, alone had 275 madrasas in 1765 AD during the reign of Sultan Mustafa III, while it had 500 madrasas in 1892 in the period of Sultan Abdul Hamieed II. During Sultan Abdul Hameed Khan's rule, each town of the empire had at least one madrasa and the big cities like Edirne, Baghdad and Cairo had forty or fifty madrasas. There were elaborate arrangements of primary education in every village and town where the students were given education free of cost. At least 50 per cent of Muslim children got this education. The caliphate enjoyed madrasas of higher classes in which the students were provided with religious and literary education. These madrasas were fully controlled by Ulama Islamic scholars. This condition lasted up to nineteenth century until some changes were made by Tanzinat measures. The education system was divided into two parts. The religious education system was entrusted to Shaikh-ul-Islam and the responsibility of modern education was put on a new department called "Ma'arif" (sciences). The madrasas were provided budget from the income of Waqf (endowment).<sup>32</sup>

### **Madrasas in Islamic India**

The Indian subcontinent was very close to Arabian Peninsula because of its trade and business relations. There were direct

32. *Urdu Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, pp. 430-431.



sea routes between the two nations beside the land route. It helped much both the nations to exchange their cultural assets along with economics. When Islam spread throughout Arabia, the coastal areas of India were familiar to Muslims. The message of Islam reached India in the last years of first Hijra century. The Arab traders with their clean character, trustful and mannered living attracted people to Islam. Later on, the Indians became closer to Islam when pious Muslim personalities (Sufis) came to India and spread the truth along with the Muslim conquerors established their rule and introduced Islamic justice system in India. The credit to create educational awareness in India goes to the Muslim rulers who broke the widely believed tradition that only the Brahmins have the privilege to study.

Education in India, before the advent of Islam, was considered to be the monopoly of Brahmins. They excluded the lower class people to acquire knowledge because they thought themselves to be superior and believed that it is "casting pearl before swine" as an English proverb says. The Indian society was divided into four categories of varna; *Brahmin, Chatri, Vaish* and *Shudra*. Only the Brahmins had right to get education even when their civilization was on its full swing. Though there were mass revolts against the notion and later took the shape of Buddhism and Jainism, but soon these religions grew weaker the previous condition returned. None can deny the glory of Nalanda and Taxila universities, but after all, the fact is that the common people were always deprived of education in Hindu periods. When Islam came to India it had to fight the mindset that prevailed. Ultimately, by the efforts of Muslim rulers every citizen of the country, whether Muslim or Hindu, man or woman, rich or poor, had right to achieve knowledge."<sup>33</sup>

33. S.M. Jaffar (1984), *Taleem Hindustan Kay Muslim Ahd-e-Hukumat mein*, pp. 17-18, Traqqi Urdu Bureau, New Delhi.

### First Madrasa in India

The early Muslim rulers do not appear to have been conversant with such formal educational institutions. For, they encouraged learned persons as well as those who adopt any art of craft through liberal grants and benefactions to impart their knowledge and skill privately to students having an aptitude for the same. Likewise, the religious doctors too taught the students privately, either at their own houses or in the mosques and monasteries. Most of them did so only to seek the pleasure of Allah and they never accepted any thing for the services rendered, nor did they approach the kings and grandees for financial help in any form. Nevertheless, a number of later Muslims rulers and their nobles established numerous educational institutions which provided not only free boarding and lodging to the teachers and students but they also paid handsome stipends to attract students to these institutions.

It was only in the seventh Hijra century that Muslims established a government in Delhi. Sultan Qutubuddeen Aibak (d.1210), a freed slave of Sultan Muhammad Ghauri (d. 1206) took over as a ruler in 1206. The first madrasa that has any mention in history books was Madrasa Firozi in Multan built by Nasiruddeen Qubacha who was ruler there. The renowned scholar Qazi Minhaj Siraj (d. 658 AH – 1259 AD) has written that he had undertaken the charge of that madrasa in 624 AH—1226 AD. There were two other madrasas in that period, which are mentioned as Madrasa Ma'zia and Madrasa Nasiriya."<sup>34</sup>

### Muslim Rulers and Madrasas

By the fourteenth century, the custom of establishing Islamic schools had become common in India. The period of Sultan

34. *Tarikh Darul Uloom Deoband*, English translation, Mahboob Rizvi, p. 52, vol. 1; *Tabqat-e-Nasiri*, p. 124, Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

Alauddeen Khilji (1297-1316) is the brightest chapter of Islamic India's political, educational and cultural history. His contemporary historian Ziyauddin Burney states that Delhi those days enjoyed such scholars, intellectuals and experts of different arts who had no match in the entire Islamic world<sup>35</sup> There is a report about the madrasas in period of Tuglaq rule in Delhi:

There were as many as one thousand madrasas in Delhi alone during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Tuglaq (725/1324—752/1351). Salaries for the teachers were fixed from the royal treasury. Education was so common that slave girls used to be Hafiz of the Qur'an and scholars. Along with religious sciences the rational sciences were also taught.<sup>36</sup>

Firoz Tuglaq (752/1351—790/1388), the successor of Muhammad Tuglaq, started new madrasas and renovated the old ones. He issued stipends for the teachers and endowed big fiefs for the madrasas.<sup>37</sup>

It stands out as a very important feature of the academic services rendered by Firoz Shah that he paid special attention to the education and training of slaves and their children. Besides the memorizing of the holy Qur'an, the slaves were also provided a chance to acquire other religious sciences, and besides education they were also taught industries and crafts. According to a statement of Shams Siraj Afif, as many as 1,80,000 slaves acquired education and training in different arts, sciences and crafts.<sup>38</sup>

The same Firoz Shah established separate schools for girls also. The world-renowned globe-trotter, Ibn Batuta describing a place, Hanor, in south India (now a Tehsil in Maharashtra state), has written: "Many women here know

35. *Sawaneh-e-Sheikh Abdul Haque*, p. 22.

36. *Tarikh Darul Uloom Deoband*, Vol. 1, p. 53.

37. *Ibid*, *Tarikh Frishta*, Vol. 1, p. 151.

38. *Ibid*, Vol. 1, p. 54; *Tarikh Firozshahi*, pp. 191-2.

the Qur'an by heart and I saw thirteen schools for girls in this city."<sup>39</sup>

Sheikh Abdul Haque Dehlawi has complained that academic standard in the age Sultans of Tuglaq (1320-1413) had gone down. The Arab tourists have asserted that Delhi alone had 1000 madrasas where was an elaborate arrangements of lodge and food for the students.<sup>40</sup>

The sultans of Jaunpur were known as Shahan Sharq (Kings of East). Sultan Malik Sarwar established the government in 1389. This kingdom collapsed in 1484 when Sultan Sikandar Lodhi conquered it and included it into his Delhi kingdom. All the sultans of Jaunpur were fond of education and arts. They invited scholars, men of arts and experts from other parts of Islamic world and hosted them. This is the reason that Jaunpur became a centre of the Muslims' arts and sciences and a resort of the Ulama. It was a city entitled with "the Shiraz of India". We can say that in deed it was the Shiraz of India or the Paris of middle ages. It has a glorious history of madrasas and mosques.

The Sharqi Sultans were the rulers of Jaunpur, in eastern India. They built hundreds of madrasas. They invited scholars and men of accomplishments from distant countries and granted them valuable fiefs. The academic and educational superiority of Jaunpur lasted till the last period of the Lodi Sultans. The building of the madrasa attached to the Atala mosque is extant to date. Around the mosque sprawls a vast chain of rooms. The famous and clever king of India, Sher Shah Suri (877/1472—952/1545) had been the alumnus of this very mosque-seminary.<sup>41</sup>

39. *Ibid*, p. 53, Vol. 1; Urdu translation of *Safar Nama-e-Ibn Batuta*, p. 702.

40. *Sawaneh-e-Sheikh Abdul Haque*, p. 27.

41. *Tarikh Darul Uloom Deoband*, Vol. 1, p. 54; *Jaunpur Nama*, p. 4 and *Siyar Al-Mukhtarin*, Vol. 1, p. 140.



The state Gujrat was amongst the first places in India, which saw the light of Islam and Islamic sciences coming to the soil. After Sindh, it is Gujrat that enjoyed the advent of great Ta'ab'een (those who saw and learned from Sahaba) and Tab-e-Ta'ab'een (those who saw the pupils of Sahaba). First it was Mahmood Gaznavi who conquered Gujrat in 416 AH. From 1407 begins the bright era of Sultans of Gujrat on which finally Akbar put an end and affiliated it to his great kingdom of Agra in 1572.

Islamic Gujrat from its genesis was a centre of education and Ulama. All the rulers of the state, especially 'Sultans of Gujrat' had no match in love towards education and respect for Ulama. The state had big educational institutes as Maulana Abdullah Surati has described it with detail in his Arabic book "*Azwaun ala Tarikh-il-Harakat al-Ilmia w al-Mahahid-il-Islamia w al-Arabia fi Gujrat*." He has named at least 32 great institutes that existed in the state during Muslim period.<sup>42</sup>

The Mughal period is the longest and most developed period of Islamic India. The Mughal Empire proved to be the last Muslim rule over India. Nearly all of the Mughal emperors were lovers of knowledge and scholars but Shah Jahan and Aalamgir have no match for that. There are very few examples in the history that throw light on the educational activities of these rulers.

During Shah Jahan's reign (1037/1627—1068/1657) Delhi, Lahore, Siyalkot, Ahmedabad and Jaunpur were such centres of sciences that students, besides those of India, were drawn to them from Herat and Badakhshan. The Fatehpuri Mosque and Akbarabadi mosque were built during Shah Jahan's regime. The madrasa at the Fatehpuri mosque is a noble relic of the same period. In 1060/1649

42. Maulana Abdullah Surati (1984), "*Azwaun ala Tarikh-il-Harakat al-Ilmia w al-Mahahid-il-Islamia w al-Arabia fi Gujrat*", pp. 83, 98, Nadwat-ul-Ulama, Lucknow.

Shah Jahan had built a magnificent madrasa that he had named Darul Baqa.<sup>43</sup>

During the Mughal regime, the educational advancements of Aurangzeb Aalamgi's period (1068/1657—1118/1706) are generally well-known. Besides big cities, Aurangzeb started madrasas in towns and villages also, granted fiefs to scholars and teachers and stipends to students. Through his vigorous efforts the candles of knowledge were lighted in every city, even towns and villages. In Lucknow the greatest educational known as Madras-e-Nizamia, situated in Frangi Mahal, is a monument of the same period.<sup>44</sup>

These days Purab (the eastern area) was teeming with scholars and men of learning. Shah Jahan often used to say proudly "Purab Shairaz e ma ast" i.e. (East is the Shiraz of our country). Later on, in the east sprung up two states Awadh and Allahabad. They continued to maintain their position as places of learning. As Maulana Gulam Ali Aazad Bilgrami has stated:

Much of the area of the provinces of Awadh and Allahabad consist of the habitations of men of noble descent, each situated at a distance of ten to twenty miles from one another. There is an abundance of mosques, madrasas and hospices. Everywhere the teachers and professors keep their doors wide open for the seekers of knowledge and persuade them to acquire knowledge.<sup>45</sup>

When we look throughout the Islamic Indian history we find it full of life, vitality, and spirit. Indian soil bore countless genius Islamic scholars who are known not only in the subcontinent but also in the world due to their in-depth knowledge and matchless personalities. The country enjoyed experts of various fields like construction, medicine, science, military and trade. Not to speak of the poets and men of

43. *Tarikh Darul Uloom Deoband*, Vol. 1, pp. 56-57.

44. *Ibid*.

45. *Ibid*, *Ma'athir al Kiram*, Vol. 1, pp. 221-2.



literatures that emerged on the surface of India. All of them were educated in national madrasas where they learn religious things beside the arts.

The education system in past Muslim periods, generally, was so common that every village of India had a madrasa. The boys and girls, commonly, knew how to write and read, even the got expertise in various arts.<sup>46</sup>

There are traces of four types of institutions in early periods of Islam in India; institutions established by governments, adjoining to monasteries, mosques and mausoleums. The mosques these days had madrasas where children used to learn.<sup>47</sup>

### A Question

After all, here a question may arise in the mind of a history student that why one doesn't find any special mention of educational activities of the past Muslim rulers. The only thing one finds mentioned in history with great ambition and emotion is the epics and battles fought by them. Nearly every writer has expressed the same impression when he comes to collect some matters on education. I explored the

46. Maulana Hussein Ahmad Madni, *Al-Halt-u-Talimia*, p. 25, translated in Arabic by Maulana Noor Aalam Khalil Al-Amini, Deoband.

47. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Sawaneh-e-Sheikh Abdulhaque Muhaddis Dehlawi*, p. 18, Nadwatul-Musannifeen, Delhi. Hakim Sayyid Abdul Hayee, Lucknow, a great historian, has written a book namely *India during Muslim Rule*. In this book, the author has introduced about 125 famous madrasas of Muslim period. Similarly, Maulana Manazir Hasan Ghilani's famous book *Hindustan mein Musalmanon ka Nizam-e-Talim wa Tarbiyat* in two volumes is a tremendous book on the very topic. *Taleem Hindustan Ke Muslim Ahd Hukumat Mein*, written by S.M. Jaffar, 2nd edition, Taraqqi Urdu Bureau, New Delhi, 1984, is a good effort to cast a light on the educational activities of Muslim rulers in India. This book has a scholarly collection that can help those who wish to know regarding the matter.

main reasons that may impede in the way of this important subject. Finally, I came across a book that put a satisfactory solution to my problem. It stated two reasons for that:

- The Muslims, by virtue of their religious propensity, always looked upon the function of imparting and receiving education, of teaching and learning, a religious occupation and an act of virtue. Help to students, dissemination of education, and endowments for the supply of books, establishing madrasas and support to the Ulama were considered by them to be a religious commandment. Hence these things too, like other necessities of life, had become a part and parcel of their lives.
- In olden days, there used to be no buildings for educational purposes. Mostly mosques were used for the same. All the mosques of those days used to serve as madrasas; as such, every old spacious mosque was a great educational institution also. This is the reason that we find spacious and splendid mosques at every step in the old Islamic cities of India... The mosques indicate by their form and appearance that a major portion of them was used for learning purpose. In these mosques you will still find a vast succession of small rooms around the courtyard. These were, in fact, the residential quarters for the teachers and students. The old hospices and monasteries were commonly used as teaching institutions. The cloisters and rooms that were constructed along with the mausoleums built over the graves of sultans and saints were also used for the same. Usually, renowned Ulama used to teach at their own homes and mosques.<sup>48</sup>

48. *Hindustan ki Qadeem Darsgahein*, pp. 10-12, Darul Musannifeen, Azamgarh.

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## 2

# FREEDOM MOVEMENT (1857) AND MADRASAS

## *A Turning Point for Madrasa Educational Systems*

Eighteen hundred fifty seven, in Indian history, is a name of terrible era that not only snatched the power from Muslims' hand but also shook the entire social, economical and religious structure of Muslims. There was not even a single person in Delhi and neighbouring cities, which witnessed the revolution, who could not affect the bloody and vigorous attacks of British army. 1857 is a turning point where a history ended and another one started. It was last armed effort that Indian, especially Muslims, carried out against the English who came to India as traders and kept on holding it into their grip until they put an end to the centuries old Mughal Empire. Since Muslims were in the forefront of this struggle that was named by colonial masters as 'Mutiny' so they reap dire consequence after British army defeated them. A horrible massacre and plundering took place. Delhi was destroyed, and thousands of people were killed. Ulama were the main target of British oppression and persecution. The word Maulavi was synonymous to rebel in British dictionary. Out of 200,000 people martyred during the revolt more than 51,200 were Ulama. *Edward Times* has admitted that in Delhi alone 500

Ulama were hanged to death. Not to speak of the rest who were undergoing imprisonment and living in hideouts.

Thirty seven thousand Muslims were only hanged to death. Not to speak of those who were martyred during one weeklong massacre. Even the children were not spared. They perpetrated barbarism on women beyond imagination.<sup>49</sup>

### 1857 and Madrasas

Muslim Ulama, who actively participated and led the revolution movement, became natural enemies of the Whites. Thousands of them were killed and thousands were imprisoned. Apart from them, madrasas and Islamic institutions were pulled down. There was not left even a single madrasa in Delhi that had one thousand madrasas in the period of Sultan Muhammad Tuglaq. The endowments and properties of Waqf on which the madrasas of those days depended financially were confiscated. So the educational institutions that survived British destruction remained closed and later perished due to the devastating policies of the government. The Ulama who escaped British tyranny remained scattered and got stuck to their problems.

The British have perpetrated boundless acts of tyranny against the Muslims for their fault, if at all it was a fault, of the uprising in 1857 and their relentless endeavour for the independence of this country thereafter. They have left no stone unturned to plunder and obliterate the Islamic art and science, Muslim culture and civilization. Endowments of Muslim educational institutions have been confiscated and as a result state funded schools have been virtually closed.<sup>50</sup>

49. *Tarikh-e-Nadwah*, Vol. 1, p. 34; *Qaisarut Tawarikh*, p. 454.

50. Sayyid Mahboob Rizvi, *History of Darul Uloom Deoband*, Vol. 1, pp. 113-14, Deoband.



The second thing that causes harm to Muslims' education was the withdrawal of endowed lands of Muslim rulers for educational purposes by British government in 1838. According to Mr. James Grant, these endowments were equal to the united states of Bengal. This, in the words of Dr. Hunter, gave a blow to the education system of Muslims in India. From here start the days of Muslims' decline in the field of education.<sup>51</sup>

William Hunter wrote in his book *Our Indian Muslims*: "Before we could occupy the Muslims were not only politically powerful but also they were much more stronger mentally. Their education system was able to provide them high training. It was better than all Indian systems."<sup>52</sup> Since madrasas were the fountainhead of awareness and education for Indians so in order to dry it out they killed, exiled Ulama and blocked all the resources for the madrasas. The history furnishes record:

The events of 1857 turned Delhi upside down. The mosques were destroyed, monasteries pulled down and the madrasas were ploughed up. The exemplary Akbarabadi Mosque was reduced to rubbles. Madrasa Rahimia, the biggest madrasa of the capital, where gushed fourth the wisdom of Shah Waliullah (RA), was given the title of "Madrasa Ra'e Bahadur Lala Ram Kishan Das."<sup>53</sup>

"Madrasa Darul Baqa built by Shah Jahan in 1649 AD was destroyed in the early 9th century. Mufti Sadrudden Aazurda (d. 1285/1868) revived it and persons like Maulana Nanautavi accommodated there. In 1857 event, the English government confiscated his all properties that caused the madrasa to wither away."<sup>54</sup>

51. *Raushan Mustaqbil*, p. 191.

52. Maulana Sayyid Muhammad Miyan, *Ulama-e-Haq awr un ke Karname*, p. 18, Jamiat-ul-Ulma-e-Hind, Delhi.

53. *Tarikh-e-Mashaikh-e-Chisht*, p. 346.

54. *Tarikh Darul Uloom Deoband*, Vol. 1, p. 57.

Delhi college which produced Shamsul Ulama Deputy Nazir, Maulin Zakaullah, Muhammad Hussain A'azad and even Sir Sayyid and Maulana Nanautavi was shut down. Pandit Brij Mohan Kaifi has painfully describes the situation:

The revenge that British government took after 1857 is horrible enough. They took Delhi out of UP and made it a part of Punjab. In 1877 when Viceroy came to Delhi from Calcutta, some Muslim leaders extended a memorandum to him requesting him not to demolish Delhi College and to withdraw the order to terminate it. But all efforts went in vain. He replied that Lahore Presidency is getting a university value so now there is no need for Delhi College.<sup>55</sup>

The English rejoiced their victory and mentioned it with pride and joy as Mr. Bordeaux Molar says: "It is a fact that we have dried out the minds of Indians. We have attained such victory that not only put an end to the sources of educational and academic development but also we posed a threat to their inherited assets."<sup>56</sup>

#### Educational Policy of the British Government

To begin with, the British in India were not in favour of educating the Indians, but in the long run they set up a commission in 1811 that recommended the parliament to pass the resolution in favour of education for Indians. Then only Indians were given the right to learn and a hundred thousand rupees were approved per annum. The purpose was to produce English speaking Indians so that they can stabilize their feet in India. They never meant to educate Indian to make them intellectual. In 1823, a committee, formed to discuss the medium of language the educational institutes, headed by Lord Michelle. The report submitted by Michelle

55. *Tarikh Nadvatul Ulama*, Vol. 1, p. 38, Delhi College Magazine.

56. *Ibid*, p. 31.

is a landmark in history of modern education in India. He clearly admitted:

We have to form a group of people who will serve as interpreter between us and our thousand million subjects. This should be a group that in view of their blood and colour will be Indians but English in view of their understanding and opinion.<sup>57</sup>

### Christian Missionaries and their Menace

The biggest challenge that Muslims faced in 19th century was Christian missions that were followed by Shuddhi movement to convert ignorant Muslims. The English, on one hand, went on burning and destroying Delhi and its nearby cities and towns, while, on the other, trained Christian missionaries were sent to preach their religion among the people. The missionaries were equipped with all materials by the new government. As a result, people began to adopt the western culture very swiftly. This move was virtually backed by the government and even sometimes policemen accompanied the missionaries. Sir Sayyid writes in *Asbab-e-Bagawat-e-Hind*.

All believed that the government will never force to convert to Christianity, but it will push them into poverty and ignorance that will result into conversion, because it has spread Christian's scriptures and preachers to tempt Muslims to accept their faith.<sup>58</sup>

French writer Gustauliban writes in *Tamaddun-e-Arab* also shares the same idea:

Now a days, India has a population of 50 million Muslims and they are increasing day by day. Though the British this time are ruling over the country and they have a

57. *Raushan Mustaqbil*, p. 171.

58. Maulana Sayyid M. Miyan, *Ulma-e-Haq awr un ke Karname*, p. 24.

good number of Fathers (padries) with them who perform the job of converting Muslims into Christianity. But so far there is no example in which the missionaries succeeded.<sup>59</sup>

It was not so that the ruling class was not aware of Christian missionaries and their activities, but those who were in Parliament they were all dreaming to unfurl the flag of Christ's victory over India. As relates one historian:

One only can imagine the sentiments of the English, whether he is an employee or a parliamentarian, in the light of this speech delivered by Mr. Mingles, a member of the parliament. He gave the speech at the commencement of Common House in 1857 where he says: "God Almighty has shown us the day when India is at the feet of England so that we hoist the flag of Christ Jesus' victory from one corner of India to the other. Each one of us should try every nerve to convert the whole India to Christianity."<sup>60</sup>

Not only this, but the clergymen of Christian missionaries became so bold that they not only started preaching and giving sermon on the steps of Jama Masjid Delhi but also they passed blasphemous remarks on Islam and the Prophet (pbuh). Here is a report, which will help us to understand the enormity of Christian missions in the country:

It is estimated that before 1900 AD, at least 42 missions were established in India. The different sects of Christians divided different parts of India to preach their ideology. For example Punjab was given to Scotland's Burbazitrian Church, Rajputana to Roman Catholic Church of Ireland

59. Translated into Urdu by *Tamaddun-e-Arab*, p. 211, Gustauliban, *Civilization of Arabs (French)*, Sayyid Ali Belgrami.

60. Maulana Muhammad Miyyan, *Ulma-e-Haq awr unke karname*, p. 26, Jamiat-e-Ulma-e-Hind Delhi; *Hukumat-e-Khud Ikhtiyari*.



while northern and western India was handed over to Methodist Church of America. The towns and villages of India were dotted with Christian missionaries. Only the Methodist church had 250 missions in various parts of India.<sup>61</sup>

### Three Educational Movements of the Age

The Ulama who escaped the deadly 1857 revolt were not neglectful of the serious situation arising in India due to the British educational policies, Christian missions and Shuddhi Sangthan. They knew well that if no drastic steps were taken to protect the community from the venom of British policies it would vanish from the Indian soil. So they also changed their policy and thought of setting up educational institutions. In their view, it was the only solution to tackle the menace that posed to Muslims' entity and identity. Ulama and well-wishers of the Ummah began to chalk out future plan on their own. After the turmoil of 1857, the first institution that came into being was Madrasa-e-Islami Deoband, which was later called as Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband. On the other side, shortly appeared Madrasat-ul-Uloom in Aligarh that was later known as Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh. These two institutions are the pioneer of educational activities of Muslims. They forwarded the all-embracing mission that Shah Waliullah started when felt that the Mughal Empire is on the edge of fallout. The founders of the two schools were directly taught and brought up by Shah Waliullah's successors. All these two movements undertook different kinds of responsibilities for the betterment of Muslims and played key roles to shield Muslim community from their enemies on every front.

Since in the past, the power was in Muslims' hands, they arranged the education according to the need of the government and the society. There was no line of demarcation

61. *Tarikh-e-Nadvah*, Vol. 1, p. 41.

between the religious as well as the modern education. The educational institutes had both types of faculties. In early 19th century we see that Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Maulana Qasim Nanautavi both learned at Delhi College. As Maulana Nanautavi and Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi graduated in Islamic studies Sir Sayyid got both sorts of education over there.

I have drawn a line of demarcation between pre-1857 and post-1857 eras. Undoubtedly, 1857 is a major turning point for the educational systems in India. As the power changed hands the entire structure of education also suffered a great deal of changes. Since pre-1857 India had an education system set by Muslim scholars and run by Muslim governments. But after 1857 when the British undertook the complete control over Delhi and exiled Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar to Rangoon, they changed every system belonging to Muslims and replaced it by their own. Basically, though the British came to India with the aim of sucking the blood of the country, but they did not forget their mission that they were entrusted by their bosses in England. One the on hand there was a chain of Christian missionaries who were hosted by the Delhi government while, on the other, Muslim Ulama were targeted throughout the country. Since the government took it for granted that Muslims, especially Ulama are the only people who are threat to British colonialism.

After 1857, the English put an end to the Islamic schools and colleges and established English schools and colleges. The Urdu language, then an official language, was discarded and replaced by English. Muslims were so nervous and depressed due to the dismissal of Muslim empire and relentless British tyrannies that they could not even think of education other than their survival. As it is said that great movements and personalities are gift of bad times, Islamic history is full of such events. It raised from the debris and ruins afresh, anew and full of spirit. So in these turbulent days too emerged some movements, which later turned out

to be landmark in post 1857 history. Only to them goes the credit to secure the Islamic identity, glory and splendour and to advance them. Among them there are two important movements; Darul Uloom Deoband and Aligarh Muslim University that figured one after another. Interestingly, the two movements were educational and belonged to Shah Waliullah. They marked the freedom movements and helped Muslims a lot to restore lost confidence, dignity and distinguished entity.

### Darul Uloom Deoband

Maulana Nanautavi led Darul Uloom Deoband movement. Since it was a new experience of its kind that Muslim scholars faced after 1857. Muslims had lost Islamic government along with their institutions and there was no signal from the new administration to finance Muslim schools. It was the same situation that Muslims underwent in Spain in 1492 when local Christians overthrew Muslim ruler and occupied the throne. Then the Spanish Muslims were subjugated, killed and forced to convert. Consequently, they lost their identity and mingled in the people over there. The India's situation in 1857 differs from that of Spain's in 1492 because India witnessed some powerful and energetic educational movements that helped the remaining seeds to flourish and blossom.

So there were two major questions before the Muslim scholars and leaders whether to safeguard the shattered religious heritage or to adopt the British educational systems that was basically started to produce workers and low-rank employees for the alien government. Some scholars, Maulana Nanautavi on the foremost, came up with the idea of setting up religious institutions to be run by the donations of common Muslims. He was of the opinion that Muslims cannot guard their religion and culture until they are not strong enough in faith. The only way to survive was to introduce proper religious education to each and every individual in the community.

Though the education that British government wanted to spread was a part of its disastrous policy but no doubt that these educations were necessary by any means for the Indian and every nation, which wanted to go parallel with the advanced nations. But the problem was that modern education was poisoned with materials that go against Islamic teachings and even urged students to revolt against religion. This was the nature of the modern education that sprung out from Europe because it came into being as a result of strong reaction against Christianity. The fault lay in the barbaric, inhuman and unnatural behaviour of the churches.

The most frequently asked question regarding our madrasas' syllabus is how to adjust the modern science and arts, which are important enough with Islamic and old science. Now the majority of Ulama has begun to ponder upon the matter, but they are unable to adopt a balanced and middle way. There are only three options.

1. Teaching both types of sciences and art simultaneously at madrasas
2. First, modern sciences and arts, then Islamic studies
3. First, needful Islamic Uloom in shorter time, then modern Uloom

The first and second forms have been applied in India by some educational institutions. Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow and Usmania University Hyderabad have experienced the mixture syllabus while Muslim University has tested the second form by opening PhD classes. The results of the two systems have also come into light. The students, who have learned according to the third form, after the establishment of modern universities in India, are so lesser in number that can be counted on fingertips. But the fact could not be denied that the third form has produced such ideal Ulama in knowledge and piety that the other two forms could not.<sup>62</sup>

62. *Sawaneh-e-Qasmi*, Vol. 2, pp. 276-77.



Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani, the author of *Sawaneh-e-Qasmi* (An authentic biography of Maulana Nanautavi) has summarized Maulana Nanautavi's viewpoint regarding education. He has taken the material from a speech delivered by Maulana Nanautavi in a connotation ceremony in 19 Zulqada 1290 AH correspondent to 9 January 1874. The below mentioned detail is from his book. Maulana Nanautavi could not take the first and second forms as applicable. He termed the third form as more useful for the Ummah. He was of the opinion: "We have to draw our attention to the aspect which is imperfect and neglected."

He clarifies that the government has sponsored the modern sciences and it has suppressed religious education. So in this case if the madrasas teach modern education it will be of no use since the madrasa graduates will not be recognised in government institutions for jobs. In his own words:

The wise men know that modern education, nowadays, is so common owing to the abundance of governmental schools that the ancient sciences might have not been so in Muslim Sultans' days. The Islamic sciences and arts suffered such decline that they could never witness in past.<sup>63</sup>

So it seemed wise to let the government supervise the educations it does. And, let's arrange the religious educations with the help of common people. The education that the government wants to bury and if the Muslims will remain deprived of them they will remain only in the pages of history books. So "it was obligatory to pay attention towards the Islamic studies and the current sciences which lead to perfection in this field."

As far as the matter of modern arts and sciences is concerned, Maulana Nanautavi was not oblivious of its importance though the British government imposed anti-

63. *Sawaneh-e-Qasmi*.

religion system with materialistic perspective. Despite all enmity and hatred towards the English he was realistic and free from narrow-mindedness. He, wholeheartedly, permitted Muslims students to join English colleges but it was conditioned with that they first have to learn basic teachings Islam so that they may not fall prey to western charm. He says: "Having completed the course of Darul Uloom Deoband if the students go to acquire the knowledge of modern sciences it will them to be perfect."<sup>64</sup>

Out of the above-mentioned three forms Maulana Nanautavi chose the third as applicable and beneficial for Ummah. He has justified his choice and has answered the questions why didn't he choose the first or the second. He says:

"Learning many types of things at a time causes harm to every thing."<sup>65</sup>

In this case the student will never be perfect, neither in Islamic sciences nor in modern sciences. In this age of specialization how both the items can be learnt at a time.

If you talk of the second form that the student first learns modern arts and sciences then goes to madrasa. This form is quite difficult and almost impossible. Reason being that when the student will start his education journey with modern sciences that is poisoned with materialistic and anti-religious contents. This situation not only will affect the religious outlook of a Muslim boy but he will hardly be able to believe in Islamic teachings. The second reason is that the college education takes more time than that of a madrasa. Therefore, there will be lesser chances for college students to return to madrasas. The logic as well as the experience both support the feeling that Muslim boys first should be sent to madrasa and after getting necessary religious education should go to colleges and universities.

64. *Ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 281.

65. *Ibid*.

To implement his proposal Maulana Nanautavi reduced Darul Uloom's educational duration from ten years to six years in 1985 AH. Thus, if a Muslim boy starts learning when he is seven year old he may be *Aalim* by fifteen. After that, joining governmental schools and colleges he may be graduate up to 22/23 of his age.

#### Why this View was not implemented?

The big question that arises here is why this view was not implemented in madrasas even in Darul Uloom Deoband. Some madrasas have seven and some eight-year Fazilat course. Darul Uloom itself has adopted eight year Islamic studies course. The reasons behind the failure of this theory in the eyes of Maulana Manazir Hasan Gilani is: "It is difficult to say rightly about the hurdles that came in the way of enforcing this viewpoint. Most probably Maulana Nanautavi's early demise affected the same."<sup>66</sup>

This seems right because the speech in which Maulana Nanautavi expressed his views was in 1874 and he left for his heavenly abode in 1881, 48th of his age. Since he was in turbulent time and surrounded by odds so it is quite possible that he could not find any opportunity to translate his ambitions in to actions. His successors though forwarded his mission but perhaps in this field they could not make much progress.

#### Did Maulana Nanautavi Oppose Learning English?

Here, I would like to discuss the oft-repeated fatwa (religious order issued by authentic Islamic jurist) that Ulama prohibited Muslims to learn English. Though I have written much regarding the educational views of Maulana Nanautavi. At least I could not find even a single proof about all Ulama that can back this claim. On the contrary, I came across so many fatwas and sayings that in no way

66. *Sawaneh-e-Qasmi*, Vol. 2, p. 288.

mean that learning English is unlawful. I will quote their sayings under a separate title, but here I will particularly comment on one misquoted sentence about Maulana Nanautavi in a famous book *Inquilab 1857* edited by P.C. Joshi. It goes like this:

Muhammad Qasim, who predicated Shamli's campaign, founded a religious institution named as Darul Uloom Deoband. He formulated some principles and asked his followers to shun government aids, and regarded learning English as unlawful.<sup>67</sup>

I followed up the reference given by the writer. It was *Sawaneh-e-Qasmi*, Vol. 2, p. 221, written by Maulana Manazir Ahsan Geelani. Again I searched the main source from where he extracted. Having repeatedly covered all the 221 page and around I failed to find even a single word to indicate to the idea. Yes on the contrary, there is clear-cut speech of Maulana Nanautavi in the same book that tells us the moderation of his thoughts and his farsightedness. He says: "Having completed the course of Darul Uloom Deoband if the students go to acquire the knowledge of modern sciences it will help them to be perfect."<sup>68</sup>

One should not forget that modern science in colleges is taught through English. Not only he allowed students to learn English and modern education but also once he expressed his hearty desire to learn English during his pilgrimage in Makkah. Maulana Yaqub Nanautavi, the first Head Teacher of Darul Uloom Deoband, who accompanied him in the journey, narrated it in a short biography, published by Maktaba Darul Uloom in 1373. He says that Maulana Nanautavi happened to meet an English and talk to him through an interpreter on some Islamic matters. Having

67. K.M. Ashraf (1998), *Ihya-e-Islam ke Hami awr 1857 ka Inquilab*; P.C. Joshi, *Inquilab 1857*, p. 104, Qaumi Council Bara-e-Froge Urdu Zaban, Delhi.

68. *Sawaneh-e-Qasmi*, Vol. 2, p. 281.



completed the discourse he expressed his intention to learn English.<sup>69</sup>

Now we have to think over. If Maulana Nanautavi had forbidden learning English then how he would have thought of learning it. It is quite unjust to attribute any thing to a person for which he is not responsible. The same matter is with Ulama also that some people have publicised that they have made it unlawful to learn English.

### Establishment of Darul Uloom Deoband

The revolt of 1857 against the British regime first sparked in Merrut Cant then spread like wildfire all cross the country. It was the violent reaction of the anger and tyranny that the English perpetrated upon Indians. After the Palasi war in 1757, Tipoo Sultan in 1799 and Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed in 1831, it was the last effort from the patriots of India to free their homeland from the clutches of the English. The historians believe that Muslims, especially Ulama, led this revolution. Very near from Delhi, Thana Bhawan (now in Muzaffar Nagar, UP) was the head quarter of Mujahideen who fought the British army in Shamli (Muzaffar Nagar, UP) battlefield. Haji Imdadullah was the commander in chief and Amir-ul-Mumineen (the head of believers). Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi, Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi and Hafiz Zamin Shaheed were the commanders of three wings of Mujahideen.

The revolution suffered failure and the British army managed to clam the storm throughout the country. Not to speak of what happened to Muslims after that. Muslims, particularly the Ulama were the soft targets of British army. In this situation Haji Imdadullah migrated hiding to Makkah. Hafiz Zamin Shaheed embraced martyrdom while Maulana Nanautavi went into hiding for some days. Maulana Gangohi was captured and faced a trial and later freed.

69. *Tarjaman-e-Darul Uloom (Editorial)*, p. 6, Delhi, January 2002.

Maulana Nanautavi and his colleagues were looking for a suitable time to do some thing to make up the loss they faced. There are clear indications that he was in touch with his Ameer Haji Imdadullah as he kept on consulting other imminent persons of his area. In the long run they founded Madrasa-e-Islami at Deoband in 1282 AH correspondent to 1866.

This Madrasa was established as a movement to prepare Ulama who can lead the Muslim community on every sphere of life, who can safeguard Islamic identity and fight back the alien rulers. Hazrat Shaikh-ul-Hind Maulana Mahmood Hasan (RA), the first prominent product of Darul Uloom, used to get angry when he heard some one calling Darul-Uloom as a madrasa. Once upon a time he was reported as saying:

Did Maulana (Nanautavi) build this Madrasa just to learn and teach? The Madrasa was established before my eyes. As I know the institution was established after the defeat of 1857 to prepare some people to recover the loss of 1857.<sup>70</sup>

Another great boy of Darul-Uloom, Mufti Shafi Usmani Mufit-e-Aazam (the greatest Mufti) of Pakistan describes the purpose behind the establishment of this movement as:

The key purpose of Darul-Uloom was to foil the attempts made by Lord Macauley's education system and to produce a bunch of gallant Ulama who not only can perform the duty of saving religion in its true form but also can deliver it to the succeeding generations. So that any time when Muslim can get freedom from the colonial rule they can find the Islamic teachings as in its true and original form.<sup>71</sup>

70. Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani, *Sawaneh-e-Quasi*, Vol. 2, p. 226, Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband.

71. Mufti Shafi Usmani, *Majali-e-Muti-e-A'azam*, p. 557, Pakistan.

### Maulana Nanautavi Founder of a New Madrasa System

With the establishment of Darul Uloom Deoband Maulana Nanautavi set a bright example before the Indian Muslims. So there was a continuation of madrasas appearing one after another until it turned into a strong cobweb of madrasas all across the country. Since it was a new system that was supposed to be run with help of common people. So Maulana Nanautavi thought it necessary to work out some fundamental rules and regulations so that this system may not suffer any kind of chaos and failure. Responding to his thought he laid down an action plan comprising eight articles. These articles are known as "Usool-e-Hishtgana" (the eight principles) in Darul Uloom's history. The articles are:

1. The madrasa men should always hunt for the ways to increase donation. Try yourself and ask others for the same. Well-wishers of madrasa should always keep this in mind.
2. They should always try to carry on giving food to students and increase their number.
3. The advisers should always look at the interest of madrasa and not to insist on their words. Allah forbidding, if such case happens the madrasa will grow weaker and weaker. The advice should be on time and not be delayed but for the betterment of madrasa. It is necessary for the advisers not to be impressed in giving their opinion and the other should listen carefully with the intention as if he is convinced and will accept with no hesitation. It is necessary for the Muhtamim (rector/vice chancellor) to consult, on important issues, the advisory board or the visiting guests who are learned and sincere about madrasa. if, by chance, the advisors were not consulted due to some reasons and the matter was discussed with some others then the advisors should

not get opposed. Yes, if the Muhtamim consulted no one then the advisors have right to object.

4. It is also quite necessary for teachers of madrasa to have similar views and must not be egoistic and jealous like today's people. Allah forbidding, if it occurs the madrasa will perish.
5. The teaching materials which are proposed for a year should be completed, otherwise the madrasa cannot flourish, and if flourishes it will not be of any use.
6. Till the madrasa does not have any certain source of income it will, Allah willing, go ahead having trust in Allah. If it has some pacific source of income like industry or business or help from word-keeping affluent, then the asset of trust in Allah will go away. The help from Allah will stop and the madrasa men will quarrel each other. In short, certain means of income should not be kept.
7. The share of government and the rich also seems dangerous.
8. The donations of those who do not wish name and fame are blissful. After all good intention of the donor is a cause of establishment for madrasa.

Though, basically, these articles were written for Darul Uloom Deoband as it appears from the repeated word madrasa. But as a whole the matters that were discussed here are not limited to Darul Uloom Deoband only. In a passing reference, these 8 points don't seem to be for an ordinary madrasa. These points themselves reflect a unique and extraordinary system of education that was to be introduced in Indian subcontinent. He emphatically recommends the madrasa men to abstain from taking any permanent financial resource and governmental aids. In his view it will be dangerous for madrasas to sustain effectively. This proved true in coming days as some madrasas were affiliated to state governments like UP, Bihar, others but they lost their effect



and productivity. These madrasas were often subject to various governmental pressures and were imposed with insincere administrators that turned the madrasas into battlefield. Discords and even fighting over frivolous things have been reported among the management. I myself personally know a prominent madrasa of my district Faizabad, which before affiliation performed a marvellous job but after it got affiliation lost its centrality and productivity. A controversy took place between the teachers and the vice chancellor that once led to fight in a public place.

The second thing, which he has pointed out, is an advisory board system, which must be consisted of pious, farsighted, and well-wishers of madrasas. He has attached much importance to the donations of poor people who were in majority so that they can come closer to madrasas and feel united. In this way the madrasas provided education to the individuals of every class in the society. It helped the Muslim community to grow stronger. Otherwise, previously only the rich people, usually, had access to learn in the madrasas. Nearly 157 years have passed on this very system but today they are as fresh as they were yesterday.

Maulana Nanautavi did not aim at distributing degree for the graduates to earn livelihood. He was determined to prepare a team of giant and gallant people who can dedicate themselves to defend and face the threats and dangers posed to Islam, who can enjoy boundless emotions towards Islam, who are ever-ready to offer sacrifice for the sake of religion. He wanted to produce talented and skilful students who can create stir in academic field and lead the country at a time of political crisis.

### Revival of Madrasa System

Darul-Uloom Deoband was a unique kind of madrasa, which was unprecedented in the entire Muslim history, because the madrasas in Islamic rule were administered and financed by the Muslim rulers and Nawabs. The Muslim Nawabs,

landlords and affluent ones were first weakened and dismantled by the British Colonialists and later reduced to bankruptcy. These people would establish madrasas in their territories and endow a good deal of properties for them. Now their castles and Havelis were pulled down and their lands were confiscated. The common Muslims were not bothered to raise funds or pay fees to run a madrasa. As the history books furnish record:

The situation in that age was such that the rulers and the rich used to sponsor education and endow properties for the purpose. When the Delhi government collapsed, the Roheilkhand, near Delhi, had five thousand Ulama who taught in various madrasas and got the salary from Nawab Hafi-ul-Mulk. The same condition was prevailing in Aoudh, Hyderabad, Deecan and other states.<sup>72</sup>

The second thing that caused harm to Muslims' education was the withdrawal of endowed lands of Muslim rulers for educational purposes by British government in 1838. According to James Grant, these endowments were equal to the united state of Bengal. This, in the words of Dr. Hunter struck at the root of the education system of Muslims in India. From here began Muslims' declining in the field of education.<sup>73</sup>

So now when there was no arrangement for education the entire Muslim generation was going uneducated all across the country. Ulama thought over the matter and came out with solutions. Maulana Nanautavi shouldered to provide Muslims with the religious education. He discovered a new way to operate madrasas with the help of common Muslims' donations. Instead of depending upon a particular person or property he used common Muslims' help and set certain rules and regulations for the madrasas to follow the same

72. *Raushan Mustaqbil*, p. 156.

73. *Ibid*, p. 191.

track. Doing this marvellous job he and his colleagues set a shining example before Indian Ulama and removed the danger that loomed large at Muslims' survival. If necessary steps would not have been taken, Muslims might have perished from this soil like they perished from Spain and Sicily. The beginning of this unparalleled system in itself is an interesting story. Haji Aabid Hussain, a pious and popular person of Deoband, who was amongst the of a new institution, took the lead.

One morning he put three rupees in his handkerchief and went to Chatta Mosque to Maulana Mahtab Ali who very happily, gave six rupees and prayed to Allah. Maulana Fazlur Rahman contributed 12 while I (Maulana Fazl-e-Haq) gave Rs 6. From there he went to Maulana Zul Faqqar Ali who donated 12 rupees. By a good chance Sayyid Zul Faqqar Ali (the 2<sup>nd</sup>) was present there, so he also gave 12. After that he went to Abul Barakat locality where the amount reached 200 and till the evening it was 300. This was on Friday, 2nd Dhul Qada (11th month of Islamic Hijra calendar) 1282 AH.<sup>74</sup>

Since Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi was away in Merut, these days, so Haji Aabid Hussain wrote a letter to him explaining the situation, as it is written:

The next day Haji Sahib wrote a letter to Maulana Nanautavi that he had taken this step to raise funds. He further said that as we frequently discussed the need of a madrasa because we have to send a person to Saharanpur for answer answering one question. Suddenly the idea came in my mind and I stood up. Three hundred rupees have been collected between *Asr* and *Maghrib* (prayer names). You come soon.<sup>75</sup>

74. Maulana Nizamuddin Aseer Adravi, *Maulana Nanautavi: Hayat awr Karname*, pp.126-27; *Tarikh-e-Darul Uloom Deoband*, Vol. 1, p. 151.

75. *Sawaneh-e-Qasmi*, Vol. 2, p. 250.

Thus the work started. The financial problem, the biggest one, was solved. A madrasa was opened. Taking all the people of the town into confidence an appeal was published in which Muslims were informed of the madrasa and its future plan. The appeal goes so:

By the grace of Allah some charitable persons of Deoband have collected some donations and started a Madrasa on 15 Muharram (1st month of Hijra calendar) 1283 AH. It is to be noticed that some fund has already been collected for the expense of 16 students beside Rs.140, which was earlier collected. The students will be provided food and lodge that will follow free books. The managers are: Haji Aabid Hussain, Maulvi Muhammad Qasim, Maulvi Mahtab Ali, Maulvi Zul Faqqar Ali, Maulvi Fazlurrahman, Munshi Fazl-e-Haq and Shaikh Nihaal Ahmad.<sup>76</sup>

Previously, the madrasas were patronized by ruling class people and endowments. The teachers were paid salaries by the income of the endowments while some taught at their homes freely. In these cases the students had to bear the expenses. That is why the religious education was confined to a particular section of the society. The education was beyond the access of common and poor people. The Deoband Madrasa, first of all, cleared this hurdle to promote education and provided the students with their lodging and food. This was a revolutionary decision taken by the founders of the madrasa. This is an evident proof of their farsightedness and intelligence. According to Maulana Nizamuddin Aseer Adravi's analysis, this is the thing that has given Darul Uloom Deoband a pioneering position. From here starts the renaissance of madrasas in India-subcontinent. People all

76. Maulana Nizamuddin Aseer Adravi, *Maulana Nanautavi: Hayat awr Karname*, p. 13, Shaikh-ul-Hind Academy, Deoband.



over the subcontinent began to establish madrasas on this pattern.<sup>77</sup>

#### Establishment of Madrasas on Darul Uloom Pattern

In the late thirteen century Hijri, at about the time of the establishment of Darul Uloom, the old system of madrasas in India had almost come to an end. Even if some madrasas were extant here and there, their position was only parochial; none of them had a central position. Maulana Nanautavi and his colleagues had a plan to spread such kind of madrasa all across the land to cope with the emerging situation. So, they themselves started madrasas and persuaded people to do the same. Accordingly, six months after the establishment of Darul Uloom, the Madrasa Mazahir Uloom was established in Saharanpur, which is considered one of the greatest madrasas of India. It also adopted the same curriculum that was current in Darul Uloom Deoband. In Thana Bhawan also was founded a madrasa that later was made a branch of Darul Uloom. Likewise, some more madrasas came in to being at different places, as the two annual reports of 1285 and 1297 AH read:

Many high-minded gentlemen are making efforts for the opening of schools at other places also, started madrasas at places like Delhi, Meerut, Khurja, Buland Shahar Saharanpur etc.<sup>78</sup>

We express this thing with extreme happiness and thank the real benefactor that in this year new Islamic madrasas were started at places like Meerut, Gulauthi, Danapur etc.<sup>79</sup>

Jamia Qasmia Shahi in Muradabad is a famous name in the history of madrasas in India. The Muslims of Muradabad

77. Aseer Adravi, *Maulana Nanautavi: Hayat awr Karname*, p. 153.

78. *History of Darul Uloom*, Vol. 1, p. 126.

79. *Ibid*, p. 357.

started this madrasa at the suggestion of Maulana Nanautavi. Now it is counted among big madrasas known for their education and management. Similarly, Maulana Nanautavi founded a madrasa in Amroha that exists till today.

The academic benefaction of Darul Uloom did not remain confined to merely turning out Scholars but its versatile effects created such an atmosphere whereby religious schools continued to come up everywhere. It appears that people at that time had a passion to start madrasa but with the old means had altogether disappeared their high spirit also depressed. When Darul Uloom took the initiative, a new thoroughfare was opened for the Muslims.

In the earliest years, Darul Uloom attracted students from every corner of the country and even from Afghanistan and central Asia. Those who would learn there they used to go back to their region and the first priority they gave was establishing madrasa at the pattern of Darul Uloom and imparting knowledge. That is now we see that countless madrasas have appeared in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh and even in Afghanistan, South Africa, and Britain etc. Not only other parts of the world but also some people belonging to Deoband founded madrasas in Arab too. Madrasa Saulatia at Makkah and Madrasa Sharyia at Medina started by Maulana Rahmatullah Kairanwi and Maulana Sayyid Ahmad respectively. The latter of them is now also considered one of the old and big universities of Medina.

#### Aligarh Muslim University

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) is the founder of Aligarh Muslim University that came into existence in 1875, 9 year after Darul Uloom Deoband. Interestingly he is a class fellow of Mualana Nanautavi in Delhi College. He always had very close and cordial relationship with Maulana Nanautavi. The condolence letter he wrote on the demise of Maulana Nanautavi mirrors the deep love and respect that he harboured in his heart towards him. Though Maulana

Nanautavi and Sir Sayyid had very different type of thoughts but they always were considered the torchbearer of Shah Waliullah's mission. As it goes:

It is peculiar enough that when the mutiny of 1857 shook the bases of India's political and social life two opposite movements came into being. The fountainhead of both of the schools of thoughts is same. The founders of these two movements learnt from one college and one Teacher. When Delhi was destroyed and the college was shut down, Deoband and Aligarh came up. As a person stated Maulana Muhammad Qasim took the Arabic faculty of Delhi College to Deoband while Sir Sayyid brought the English department to Aligarh.<sup>80</sup>

Just opposite of Maulana Nanautavi, Sir Sayyid was a strong supporter of the English rule in India. He accepted governmental posts and was very close to English officials. During 1857 and afterwards when he stood firm in the favour of the government, he was offered property in return of his loyalty but he denied to take because it was confiscated from a Muslim. Yes, he accepted two hundred rupees pension per month.

From his childhood his ears were accustomed with the stories of chaos and declining Muslim rule. Having seen the horrible atrocities in 1857 he saw the new government establishing peace, law and order situation. It seemed as a blessing to him. That is why he was very loyal to the British government. He considered that the government is very useful for the nation.<sup>81</sup>

Beside academic works Sir Sayyid was very interested in education field. Finally, this quality prevailed and now he is known by it. First, when he was Sub-Judge in

80. Muhammad Ishaq Jalees Nadvi (1983), *Tarikh-e-Nadwatul Ulama*, Vol. 1, p. 46, Aligarh Magazine, p. 67, 1947.

81. *Mawj-e-Kawsar*, pp. 214-15.

Muradabad (UP) he founded a madrasa for Persian language. Then in Gazipur (UP) in 1864, he established a Hindu-Muslim common school where English, Urdu, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit languages were taught. Now this school has been renamed as Victoria School. Later he started Scientific Society in Gazipur, which was shifted to Aligarh with him.<sup>82</sup>

Sir Sayyid, in Indian subcontinent and the world at large, is known as an educationist who spent all his energy for educational development of Muslim community in India. His Aligarh Muslim University is considered to be the centre where the two-nation theory sprang and finally took the shape of Pakistan. But the records prove that Sir Sayyid, in the beginning, was not in favour of separate Muslim educational system as he himself in 1864 started a Hindu-Muslim common school where English, Urdu, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit languages were taught. But later he met an incident that gave a new turn to his social efforts.

Ever since Sir Sayyid's educational efforts were not made specially for Muslims, whether it is the Madrasa of Muradabad, the School and Scientific Society in Gazipur. Hindus and Muslims both were making use of the institutes. But while Sir Sayyid was at Banaras (Varanasi) some incidents took place that changed his viewpoints. These changes not only affected Sir Sayyid but also the entire country in the long run. Maulana Altaf Hussein Hali (one of great Urdu poets) writes in *Hayat-e-Javed* (an authentic biography of Sir Sayyid): "In 1867, some prominent Hindus tried to their possible extent to drive out Urdu language and Persian script from offices and courts, and they favoured Bhakha (language) in Devenagri script. Sir Sayyid used to say that this was first time he realized that it is impossible for Hindus and Muslims to co-exist as one nation."<sup>83</sup>

82. *Raushan Mustaqbil*, p. 219.

83. *Mawj-e-Kawsar*, p. 85.



The other turn that came in his life when he journeyed to Europe and saw the progresses and developments with his naked eyes. He stayed there, mostly in London, for over one and half year and studied the modern universities there. Just after returning to India in 1870 he published *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* (a monthly magazine) from which he started his mission. After publishing monthly magazine, the other thing Sir Sayyid did was the setting up of two committees for the purpose to advance Muslims in education and raise funds. He arranged an essay competition about the Muslims' education in India and prepared a report based on it for the Committee meeting. The report consisted of the proposed college scheme and the teaching system. He said:

Sir Sayyid had expressed his views regarding the government's educational system, but there is no proof that he was satisfied with the same. Specially, having seen the European universities his view changed totally. He regarded high-level training a necessary ingredient of education that was missing in British schools of India... Muslims have no option other than to care for their education on their own if they want to save the Islamic studies, to equip themselves with the modern sciences and to educate their children according to their needs... All (Sir Sayyid and his colleagues) took it for granted that the government's educational institutions do not meet the needs of Muslims. If the government itself agrees to bring some sorts of changes it will be needful. Therefore, Muslims should themselves arrange their education.<sup>84</sup>

Sir Sayyid, these days was staying in Banaras as Sub-Judge. Maulvi Samiullah, a Sub-Judge in Aligarh, was appointed the secretary of the Committee. He convened a public

84. *Raushan Mustaqbil*, pp. 232-233.

meeting on 24th May 1875 in which Sir Sayyid came from Banaras to participate. Maulvi Muhammad Ikram, Deputy Collector in Aligarh, presided over the meeting and inaugurated Madrasatul Uloom. This Madrasa later on became college and finally transformed into university in 1921.

Now let's come to this point what were the aims and objectives of Sir Sayyid by his lifelong efforts in educational field. In his own words:

Philosophy will be in our right hands, the natural science in left hands while the crown of 'La Ilaha Illallah Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah' (there is no god but Allah and Muhammad (pbuh) is the messenger of Allah) will be on our head." He regarded firm faith and pure religious nourishment as compulsory with the modern education.<sup>85</sup>

Sir Sayyid was a very realistic and quickly impressing kind of man, who, with no hesitation and hypocrisy, was a trusted loyal of the British government. Similarly, when he saw the charm of young western civilization he accepted its supremacy on the existing Muslim society in India. He was profoundly, impressed by an English writer and quoted some extracts on writing in his mouthpiece magazine *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*. As the English writes: "The Indian Muslims are the worst kind of people of Muhammad (Pbuh). Their religion is a strange mixture of Quranic commandments and Hindu idolatry."<sup>86</sup>

These were the reasons that Sir Sayyid urged Indian Muslims to bring a change in their way of life and not to lag behind from any developed nation. He, very frankly, invited people to modernism. Shaikh Ikram writes in his book *Maoj-e-Kawsar*:

85. *Maoj-e-Kawsar*, p. 146.

86. *Raushan Mustaqbil*, p. 224; *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, No. 2, p. 3.

Sir Sayyid was very upset that the Europeans disdain the Muslims in term of civilization. Therefore, he wanted Muslims to adopt their civilization wholeheartedly so that they also are called civilized and not be looked down.<sup>87</sup>

He further writes:

We have adopted the rituals of other people because of intermixing. We have to give up all bad traditions and rectify the ones, which are reparable if we want to be highly civilized so that the other developed nations could not dare to despise us.<sup>88</sup>

Sir Sayyid not only advocated to abandon the old traditions but also he raised doubts regarding many matters of the Glorious Quran and Hadith that are agreed upon by Muslims all over. It created havoc in Muslim community and he was condemned for that. But he was determined to go ahead with his plans. Some prominent Muslim leaders opposed him to the least degree. By their efforts some Ulama even issued fatwa that any person having such beliefs would become infidel. It is a matter of utter surprise and interest that all the staunch opponents of Sir Sayyid were English learned people who were employed at government posts. None of Ulama came up against him. Fortunately Sir Sayyid did not introduce his views in his madrasa.

Though Aligarh Muslim University at early stages was a modern type of madrasas but now it cannot be counted in the list of madrasas. The only reason to mention it is that Aligarh University is also a gift of the 1857 revolution and it has another extreme viewpoint about Muslims' education. This university was in favour of the British government while the madrasas were established with the core motto of driving the alien government out of country. Aligarh

87. *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, No. 2, p.1.

88. *Maoj-e-Kawsar*, p. 223; *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, No. 2, p. 6.

Muslim University followed the pattern started by Darul Uloom Deoband, collected funds from public and did not avoid the aids from government while the madrasas subsisted only on public donations rejecting any help from government. It is also worth mentioning that Aligarh Muslim University has no madrasa or institution affiliated to it. It is the only university of its kind. Though Jamia Millia Islamia was established in 1920 on the same lines on which Madrastul Uloom, Aligarh was found but it also could not guard its identity and merged in to modern government institutions.

### Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow

The two above-mentioned movements sprang into being after the 1857 turmoil. The situation these days were vague and confusing. Darul Uloom Deoband and Aligarh Muslim University took two extremes; one higher Islamic education the other higher modern education. But, after all, they did not denied the importance of each other. Darul Uloom Deoband always took the modern education seriously and tried to adjust while Aligarh Muslim University also somehow managed to maintain its Islamic outlook.

Nadwatul Ulama (Ulama council) came in to being in 1894; after 28 years have passed on Darul Uloom Deoband and 19 years on Aligarh Muslim University. Till this council emerged, by then the educational and political horizon of India was clearer. The Indian community witnessed a complete change and analysed its bad from good. Unlike Aligarh Muslim University, Nadwatul Ulama was a pure madrasa and it believed that the backwardness of Muslims lay in their negligence of religion and lack of proper religious education. Some prominent Ulama participated in a connotation of Madrasa Faiz-e-Aam in Kanpur where they decided to form a council. The council was named Nadwatul Ulama (Ulama council) and Maulana Muhammad Ali Mongeeri was made its first manager. It is worth noting that at least five Ulama



out of the 14 founding members of Nadwatul Ulama were directly educated at Darul Uloom Deoband.<sup>89</sup>

The initiator of Nadwatul Ulama was Deputy Collector Maulvi Abdul Gafoor. But, it was carried out by Maulvi Sayyid Muhammad Ali Kanpuri who originally was from Kanpur and later migrated to Mongeer (Bihar) with the purpose of preaching Islam on command of his Sheikh Hadhrat Maulana Fazl Rahman Ganj Muradabadi. Maulana Shibli Nomani and Maulana Abdul Haq Haqqani (the author of *Tafseer-e-Haqqani*) laid down its rules and regulations. Nadwatul Ulama also decide to operate on public funds on Darul Uloom pattern and avoided government support. Nadwatul Ulama came up with theses four sole purposes.

- Modification of madrasas' curriculum and preparation of a new syllabus adapted to the time.
- Producing such Ulama who having deep knowledge of Islam are acquainted with modern thoughts and the need of the hour.
- Promotion of unity and Islamic brotherhood among different sects of Islam.
- Preaching of Islamic teachings, specially amongst our countrymen.

To begin with Nadwatul Ulama wanted to experience its programme on some madrasas but later it established a Darul Uloom in Lucknow in 1898 in order to experiment its programme.

Nadwatul Ulama, with the help of expert Ulama, prepared a syllabus in accordance with need of the time. This syllabus came into force in Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, established in Lucknow. The syllabus kept on changing under some rules and regulations. The most important thing is that unnecessary subjects were discarded. Literature and Arabic were given

89. *Tarikh-e-Nadwatul Ulama*, Vol. 1, pp. 95-96.

extraordinary significance. The Glorious Quran was included into the syllabus.<sup>90</sup>

In the beginning, till the new syllabus was not prepared, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama taught Dars-e-Nizami. As Maulana Abdul Bari Nadwi, who learned at Nadwah around 1900 describes in his famous book *Mazhab awr Science*. "This age of Nadwah was like the old madrasas which taught Dars-e-Nizami. I myself had to learn Kafia, Sharh Jami and Maqamat. As I remember there was no change in Dars-e-Nizami."<sup>91</sup>

In later stages the syllabus kept on changing but the thrust was on the following subjects:

- Teaching of the holy Quran and its commentaries along with some books that are related to Quranic sciences.
- Teaching Arabic Literature, English and some other modern sciences.
- Full attention on Ilm-e-Kalam and perfection in this field so that the students can defend modern theories like communism and atheism.
- Teaching of some selected chapters of two Tasawwuf books like *Ihya'ul Uloom* and *Awarif-ul-Maarif*.
- Conducting monthly or quarterly symposiums on various Islamic topics.

With the changing of syllabus, Nadwatul Ulama recommended a number of changes in madrasa systems. According to *Tarikh-e-Nadwah*:

Maulana (Muhammad Ali Mongeeri) has asserted on family quarters for the teachers and responsible people, inside Darul Uloom campus. He drew attention to a dining hall for the students. Every student will have a separate room. They will be asked to keep their rooms clean. They have to finish their all activities within the allotted time. The students will do exercise after Asr prayer; take part in

90. *Raushan Mustqbil*, p. 211.

91. Preface of '*Mazhab awr Science*', p. 6.

horse riding, gun firing, swimming, and so on. The students will also be taught some arts and crafts according to their tendency. The most important thing that he proposed is a uniform for the students.<sup>92</sup>

Though, Nadwatul Ulama's programme in first looking was quite fine. But unfortunately it could not implement many of its agendum. It was better on part of Nadwatul Ulama that it found many madrasas that followed its pattern and now it has a good deal of madrasas affiliated to it.

### How was the Experience of the Three Movements?

It is too hard to analyze the experience of these three movements and their success in their programme. Of course each of them served the nation and community and produced great men who earn good name for the country. But, when we look at objectives of the three movements we find that each of them could not achieve its goal and betrayed the main objectives of the founders. For example, Aligarh Muslim University was founded with the aim "Quran in our right hand, Modern Philosophy in left hand and crown of 'La Ilaha Illallah Muhammadur Rasulullah' on our head." But if we see the history of Muslim University we will find that very few persons who could be counted on fingertips have come out of the University who had these qualities. On the contrary, there had been many people in University who betrayed rather revolted against Sir Sayyid's agenda. It is also true that Aligarh Muslim University could not produce persons who are true expression of Sir Sayyid's dream as it reflects from the writings of Maulana Shibli, Hali and others. Yes, it will be wrong not to admit the valuable contribution that the Aligarh boys have given on national and community levels. Aligarh Muslim University is, no doubt, our cultural heritage and great education centre.

Likewise, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama was established

92. *Tarikh-e-Nadwatul Ulama*, Vol. 1, pp. 81-82.

on the principle of a balanced synthesis of the classical education with the modern knowledge. Its chief purpose was to evolve a proper integration between the eternal fundamentals of the faith and ever-changing values of human knowledge and learning. But, today when we see Nadwatul Ulama course it does not seem to be "balanced synthesis of the classical education with the modern" that had evolved "a proper integration between the eternal fundamentals of the faith and ever-changing values of human knowledge and learning." The only thing it did was that it changed some methods, gave importance to Arabic and Science of the Glorious Quran. Besides, there is no fundamental change. Those who come out of Nadwatul Ulama madrasas they performed marvellous job in Arabic and Urdu literature, some in English also. But there is hardly any example where Nadwa student became synthesis of the classical education with the modern. After all, the religious standard of Nadwatul Ulama products is lower than those of other madrasas. Likewise Dawah, which was a supreme purpose of Nadwatul Ulama, was not achieved as it was achieved by some other platforms.

As far as Darul Uloom Deoband is concerned it was established to make up the loss that Muslim community suffered in 1857 revolution. Before we analyse, we have to find out what were the losses of 1857. Muslims lost power, Islamic educational institutes and they feared their Islamic identity slipping out. Darul Uloom Deoband, undoubtedly, was a den of freedom fighters, especially Maulana Mahamood Hasan Deobandi known as Sheikh Al-Hind and his colleagues. They fought till the country was free. Some of his companions remained in India while some migrated to Pakistan. It is known that it is Darul Uloom Deoband that revived the Islamic education system and Islamic teachings at large in the Subcontinent and produced giant Ulama in every field of Islamic learning. The product of Darul Uloom Deoband headed and participated national movements while they set matchless example in every field of Islamic Sciences.



## 3

## EDUCATION SYSTEMS THROUGH AGES

### Education System from Early Age of Islam

Islamic education provides guidance to every aspect of human life, whether it is social, political, economical, individual, collective etc. is based on the Holy Quran and Hadith. In the early age of Islam the followers were usually Arabs who directly could understand the language of the two sources. Therefore they did not need learning all Islamic sciences like today. Their economical and political necessities were very less. Very few Arabs knew writing, so the Prophet (pbuh) paid special attention to this point. Particularly, when the prisoners of Badr war were offered freedom in return of some amount money, the prisoners who knew writing each of them was asked, instead of compensation, to teach writing to ten Muslims. As per need he ordered some companions to learn foreign language like Hebrew.

As the time passed, the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) went on discovering new methods to spread knowledge among the masses. *Hadhrat* Abu Bakr Siddiq and *Hadhrat* Usman Gani, the first and third caliphs of Islam, are known for their compilation of the Holy Quran while *Hadhrat* Umar Farooq, the second Caliph, introduced a good deal of

changes in almost every sphere of life. The compilation of Hadith began in first Hijra century.

Till the middle of second Hijra century the Islamic sciences were confined to Arabs. The next two centuries are known as age of compilation and invention. Due to boundless spread of Islam in non-Arab countries many new subjects were invented. For a good understanding of the Holy Quran and Hadith Arabic grammar came into being. The everyday-new developments forced people to author books on them according to the need. The Islamic jurists had to search out solutions of new issues. In this way the learning materials increased. The Islamic sciences like Tafseer (explanation of the Quran), Hadith (the reports of sayings and actions of the Prophet (pbuh)), Usul-e-Hadith (principles of narration), Usul-e-Fiqh, Sarf, Nahv, History, Dictionaries and so on were discovered.

During 5th Hijra century Imam Gazali (450 AH to 505 AH) founded Ilm-e-Kalam to defend Islamic philosophy from Greek philosophies. With Mantiq and Philosophy became an ingredient part of Islamic education. Though the above-mentioned fields of learning were common in every Islamic state. But due to inevitable national and local conditions some differ from another. The states that were Arab—dominated Tafseer, Hadith and Asmaurrijal (records of those narrated Hadith) were the favourite fields. History, Literature and Poetry were popular in Islamic Spain while Persian people were fond of Logic and Philosophy. Likewise, the people of Khurasan and Mawaraunnahr (Central Asia) paid special attention to Fiqh, Usul-e-Fiqh and Tasawwuf.

Muslims visited India in the first Hijra century. In the beginning of 5th century Sultan Mahmood Gaznavi conquered Sindh and Punjab. But in fact the Muslim rule began when Sultan Qutubuddin Aibak (d. 1210) began to rule Delhi. This was the age in which the Central Asian Muslims attached much importance to Sarf, Nahv, Balagat, Literature, Fiqh, Mantiq, Kalam and Tasawwuf beside Tafseer and Hadith. Since the majority of Muslims who inhabited

India were from these areas, so naturally they introduced these sciences in Indian Madrasas.

#### **Four Phases of Madrasa Education Systems in India**

Hakim Sayyid Abdul Hayee, a prominent scholar and historian, has divided the changing education system of India in to four phases. The below mentioned details are derived from his article 'Hindustan ka Nisab-e-Dars awr us ke Tagayyurat' published in monthly *Tarjamm-e-Darul Uloom*, Delhi, November, December 2000 and January 2001. He has strived hard to find out the syllabuses that were taught during different Muslim rulers. He traced the changes too that took place within due course of time.

**First Phase:** it stretches from seventh Hijra century to the tenth century. For about two centuries, ten subjects were considered to be high standard education in which as a whole 17 book were taught. In the beginning, a student first was introduced to the Quran and Persian language. Later he was taught Sarf and Nahv (Arabic Grammar), Arabic Literature, Tafseer of Quran (Commentary or Exegesis), Hadith (Science of Traditions), Fiqh (Jurisprudence or Islamic Law), Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, Logic, Kalam (Scholasticism), Tasawwuf (Mysticism) etc.

Looking into the records of this age it comes out that Fiqh and Usul-e-Fiqh was the standardized fields of learning. The most authentic Hadith books could not reach India till that time. Those who conquered India they had come from Gazni and Gaur (both in Afghanistan) and these subjects were on the pinnacle.

**Second Phase:** It starts from the beginning of tenth Hijra century when Sheikh Abdullah and Sheikh Azizullah came from Multan to Sultan Sikandar Lodhi. They added some books in Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), Logic, Arabic Grammar and Kalam (Scholasticism), and introduced a new subject in the curriculum of that time namely Balagat (Figure of Speech). Thus the syllabus altogether comprised nearly 30 books of 11 subjects. In this period Sheikh Abdul Haque

Muhaddis learnt Hadith in Arab and tried to introduce Hadith books but unfortunately it could not gain ground until Shah Waliullah came.

**Third Phase:** No sooner did Akbar sit on the throne Mir Fathullah Shirazi left Shiraz (Iran) for India. He did some major additions in the customary madrasa curriculum that Ulama accepted heartily. Shah Waliullah Muhaddis Dehlawi (d. 1174 AH), who was at the end of the third phase, has given details about the books he learned. According to it, four new subjects Mathematics & Astronomy (fundamentals), Philosophy and Tib (Medical Science) were included in the syllabus beside some more books on various subjects. Thus the total number of the books taught those days became around 38.

Having learnt the above-mentioned books Shah Waliullah (RA) set out for Arab where he completed Hadith course and coming back to India he popularised the study of Hadith. From then onward Sihah-e-Sitta (six most authentic Hadith books) were added to Indian madrasas' syllabus. Shah Sahib himself drafted a syllabus but it could not get currency because the centre of Islamic education at that time had been shifted from Delhi to Firangi Mahal, Lucknow and due to frequent coming of Iranian Ulama to Mughal emperors who enjoyed expertise in Mantiq and Kalam.

**Fourth Phase:** This age belongs to Mullah Nizamuddin Lucknawi (d. 1748). The syllabus that he laid down is called after him as Dars-e-Nizami. It set up landmark in the history of teaching of Islamic Sciences in India. This curriculum laid greater emphasis on the study of logic, philosophy and other sciences. It was almost universally introduced in the madrasas throughout the country. We shall see it in detail, as it is the base of today's Madrasa systems in Indian subcontinent.

#### **Mullah Nizamuddin Lucknawi**

Mullah Nizamuddin was born in Suhali (28 miles away from Lucknow) in 1090 AH around 1678 AD His father Mullah



Qutubuddin was a great scholar. His Madrasa was famous all over the eastern province. His ancestors came from Herat (Afghanistan). Mullah Nizamuddin learnt the primary education from his father. In 1691 when he was a student of Sharh Jami some hostile neighbours killed his father. His elder brother Mullah Saeed lodged a complaint to Mughal Sultan A'alamgir Aurangzeb. He granted him a land that was called Firangi Mahal (English Palace) because previously, it was owned by a French merchant.

Mullah Nizamuddin continued his learning. He studied from Maulana Abdusslam in Dewa (UP), Mullah Ali Quli in Ja'ais (UP), Aman bin Nurullah in Banaras and finally from Skaikh Gulam Naqshband in Lucknow. For spiritual purification he contacted Shah Abduur Razzaq Banswi (d. 1723). He was a true successor of his father as the other teachers' classes were a pale shadow in comparison to his.

"There hardly may be any scholar who, directly or indirectly, has not learnt from his student or sons."<sup>93</sup>

"In the entire Indian subcontinent there hardly may be any student who has not learnt from him or his sons, his students or the students of them."<sup>94</sup>

### Dars-e-Nizami

The syllabus known, as Dars-e-Nizami, is believed to be prepared by Mullah Nizamuddin. Actually, he collected all the books that were taught in different madrasas and especially by his father with addition of some important books. Mullah Nizamuddin's objective by this syllabus was to create such ability in the students, which can enlighten their hearts and made the other books easy for them. For the first time, he included books written by Indian Ulama in the syllabus, particularly the books of his contemporary Ulama.

93. *Mawj-e-Kausar*, p. 605.

94. *Darul Uloom Monthly*, p. 100, December 2001 and January 2002, Deoband.

That was a bright proof of his sincerity and broadmindedness. Dars-e-Nizami consisted of 13 subjects and 40 books. Previously, only fundamentals of Mathematics and Astronomy were taught in the madrasas. Mullah Nizamuddin included some books on Math and three books on Astronomy. He added one more subject namely Handasa (Engineering) and recommended a book to be taught on this very topic. Dars-e-Nizami ignored Tasawwuf and Tib at all and deleted some books of Hadith, Kalam and a few other subjects and included some more books on Logic, Dialectics and Philosophy. Apart from this, he replaced some books by new and sophisticated ones. The Dars-e-Nizami syllabus lacks Arabic literature. There is not even a single book on Arabic poetry. Similarly, the syllabus has only one book on Hadith that is not so much authentic.<sup>95</sup>

Though Dars-e-Nizami is a particular syllabus designed by a particular person, it kept on changing through various stages and at different places. Nearly all the madrasas of India basically adopted this curriculum but they sometimes added books of their own choice and preference. Madrasa of Frangi Mahal, where Dars-e-Nizami was founded, completely discarded all Hadith books except one and attached much importance to Logic, Philosophy and Fiqh. While in Delhi the teachers of Madrasa Rahimia emphasized on learning of Hadith, the Ulama of Khairabad were devotedly busy teaching Logic and Philosophy and were dominated by rationalistic pattern of thought. That is why Dars-e-Nizami took different shapes and expanded and turned into a synthesis of varied thoughts. Mufti Taqi Usmani, former Chief Justice of Pakistan, has surveyed the over all situation of Dars-e-Nizami in various madrasas that consisted of 72 books on 20 subjects varying from Tafseer and Hadith up to Medical Science and Engineering.

95. See for details: Shaikh Ikram, *Rood-e-Kausar*, p. 605, Delhi; *Monthly Darul Uloom Deoband*, December 2001 & January 2002, pp. 107, 108.

The original Dars-e-Nizami actually was formed according to the requirement of the age. The Muslim empire needed judges to solve cases, doctors to cure the ill, educated to administer and so on. That is why we see Dars-e-Nizami comprises books on Islamic law, Tib (medical science), philosophy etc. in those days there used to be many departments in universities and colleges for specialization in certain topics. An Arabic College of Delhi at Kashmiri Gate is an instance of such college where scholars like Maulana Nanautavi, Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi and Sir Sayyid Ahmad have learned.

### Is Mullah Nizamuddin Really the Founder of Dars-e-Nizami?

Here, let us discuss a minor point that is related to founder of Dars-e-Nizami system. Some people say that it is not Mullah Nizamuddin who authored this system. Shah Sulaiman, successor of Fulwari Sharif Dargah, is of the opinion that Dars-e-Nizami is a self-growing education system. It has nothing to do with the Mullah. It was started by Mullah Fathullah Shirazi, who came to India during Akbar period and influenced the educational environment. The same system, later, was modified and changed until it reached this point. Sheikh Ikram has quoted an extract in his book *Rood-e-Kawsar*, from Al-Nadvah where Shah Sulaiman argues:

It is altogether a blame on Mullah Nizam to attribute this syllabus to him. Neither did he teach these books nor many of the books were written in his age. Yes, Mullah Fathullah may well be the founder of this system. Mullah Nizamuddin was a pious Sufi. Had he prepared the syllabus he would certainly have added some Tasawwuf books in the syllabus.<sup>96</sup>

96. *Rood-e-Kawsar*, pp. 162, 606.

Sayyid Gulam Ali Azad Belgarami (1704-1785), a historian of Mullah Nizamuddin's age, has met him and mentioned him in his famous book *Suhatul Marjan fi Asaar-e-Hindustan*. But nowhere he says any thing about Dars-e-Nizami. May be that this syllabus was later called as Dars-e-Nizami. On the other side, another great historian Hakim Sayyid Abdul Hayee Lucknowi clearly regarded Mullah Nizamuddin as the founder of Dars-e-Nizami in his grand encyclopaedic book *Nuzuhatul Khawatir* and in an article titled as "Hindustan ka Nisab-e-Dars awr us ke Tagayyurat".

As far as the two arguments of Shah Sulaiman are concerned, they hold no water. The first that many of the books were not written in his period is contradicting with his next sentence where he says that Mullah Fathullah may be its founder. Mullah Shirazi lived in Akbar's period (1556-1605) while Mullah Nizamuddin is of two centuries later. When many of the books were not written in Mullah Nizamuddin's time then how it existed in Mullah Fathullah's period. If Mullah Nizamuddin had been the founder he, being a Sufi, must have included any Tasawwuf book in the syllabus. It does not mean that any one is interested in any field he must want others to learn the same.

After all it is nearly true that Dars-e-Nizami is a self-growing syllabus. These were the books that were taught to madrasa students until came Mullah Nizamuddin who arranged them in a systematic way with some changes. Since every teacher taught the students some books of his own choice and so did Mullah Nizamuddin. Nevertheless, the difference is that his madrasa was a noted one and his students and sons spread throughout the subcontinent. So naturally their indexing of books became popular and the syllabus was called Dars-e-Nizami after Mullah Nizamuddin.

### Success of Dars-e-Nizami

Dars-e-Nizami from its inception became very popular. Shah Waliullah (d. 1174 AH) also tried to introduce a new



curriculum but his efforts could not meet success since the centre for Islamic education had, by this time, shifted eastwards, from Delhi to Lucknow. Frangi Mahal was a great center of education where students from across the country used to rush to learn. Mullah Nizamuddin was a great teacher. Those who learnt at his madrasa they used to introduce his syllabus due to its efficiency and effectiveness. The other thing that caused Dars-e-Nizami to spread is that this system was very suitable to that age and it included books on nearly every subject that were current that time. So, madrasas produced teachers, philosophers, judges, engineers and all kinds of men. This system used to fulfill all the requirements of that age. The syllabus included new books on *Hadith* and Qur'anic commentary, but the focus on the 'rational sciences' remained intact the products of the *madrasa* were to be trained not only for strictly 'religious' posts but also as general administrators and functionaries in the state bureaucracies. This syllabus created such giant and skilled Ulama who were not only respected in India but were also respected throughout Islamic world for their knowledge and expertise.

#### Dars-e-Nizami and Past Educationists

Dars-e-Nizami has long been a topic for discussion since the British rule imposed a new education system on the country. Nadwatul Ulama is a gift of that time. In the early years of the twentieth century, though the Dars-e-Nizami was changed and modified by madrasas but many people were not satisfied. Allama Shibli Nomani, the founder of a new era in Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama's history, a great historian, made some comments on Dars-e-Nizami:

The biggest lapse that this syllabus (Dars-e-Nizami) has is to have many other subjects other than Holy Qur'an. It has very less books on Tafseer and its branches. Only 2 books are taught on Tafseer; Baizavi and Jalalain. Out of 30 parts only two and half are taught from Baizavi.

The complete Jalalain is taught but it is so short that the number of words of the holy Quran and the Tafseer is equal. There must be exclusive attention to the Holy Qur'an. The utmost literature book that Dars-e-Nizami has is Maqamat-e-Hariri. Due to its poetic compositions, heavy words and complex sentences it proved a barrier in the way of learning good Arabic. The other book Nafhatul Yemen also does not have a high standard in Arabic.<sup>97</sup>

This syllabus (Dars-e-Nizami) has no share in Arabic language and literature. People do not regard these things as important. Whereas none can enjoy perfection until one is well versed in Arabic. So, any indifference from Arabic language is indifference from Islam itself.<sup>98</sup>

Balagat (articulation) is a subject to create a fine taste of language in students. Now this book is a plaything in the hands of non-Arab authors. A good teacher of Balagat cannot even write a letter (in good Arabic).<sup>99</sup>

Maulana Abulkalam Aazad, the first education minister of India, has written in one of his letters which is included in his renowned book *Gubar-e-Khatir*:

If the higher sciences are separated from Dars-e-Nizami it will have only two subjects as a whole; religious books and Maaqulat. The religious books are so confined that may provide knowledge of Islam but the student can never obtain expertise and perfection in Islamic matters. If the Mantiq is removed from Maaqulat the rest philosophy remains nothing but relic of a particular age, although the world had gone much ahead. And the math that is taught is nil in comparison to the math of this age.<sup>100</sup>

97. *Tarikh-e-Nadwah*, Vol. 1, p. 73.

98. *Ibid*, p. 72.

99. *Ibid*, Vol. 1, p. 74.

100. *Gubar-e-Khatir*, p. 97, Letter No. 11, compiled by Maalik Ram, 5th edition.

Maulana Hakim Sayyid Abdul Hayee (former rector of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow) has described the amendable drawbacks of Dars-e-Nizami as follows: (it is to be noticed that he has written it after 1900; after establishment of Darul Uloom Nadwah)

1. This syllabus urges student to study more but it does not urge to acquire in-depth knowledge of it. That is the reason that the students have developed undue presumption and do not attain perfection.
2. The mantiq books are more than necessary. It has 15 books on mantiq such as Sugra, Kubra, Aisagoji, Qala Aqulu, Mizan Mantiq, Tahzib Sharh Tahzib, Qutubi, Mir Qutubi, Mulla Hasan, Hamdullah, Risala Mir Zahid, Gulam Yahya Mir Zahid, Mulla Jalal and Qazi Mubarak.
3. There are only two books on Tafseer; Baizavi and Jalalain. Only two and half parts of Baizavi out of 30 are taught while Jalalain is taught completely but it is so short that the words of Qur'an and Tafseer are equal.
4. Arabic literature that helps Hadith and Tafseer a great deal to understand has very less share in Dars-e-Nizami. There are only two books on Balagat; Mukhtasar and Mutawwal. Though complete Mukhtasar is taught but only one fourth of Mutawwal. This syllabus does not have any book on geography, history, Quranic sciences and other necessary fields of learning.<sup>101</sup>

### Shah Waliullah & His Family's Educational Contribution

Before I go to describe the history of 1857 and post-1857, which is an all round turning point and landmark of complete revolution in India, it seems necessary to have a brief idea of

101. *Tarjaman-e-Darul Uloom*, p. 31, January 2001, Delhi.

the contributions that Shah Waliullah and his family extended towards Islamic education in India so that we could understand what will follow it about the present madrasas. Today's madrasas in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh belong to Madarsa Rahimia from where these madrasas have got light and energy. Though at that time, there were some famous institutions, such as Frangi Mahal Lucknow known for Fiqh and Khairabad known for Logics and philosophy, that imparted Islamic knowledge but it was only Madrasa Rahimia, which took the lead to head the prevailing religious system of India.

This madrasa was built by Shah Abdur Rahim (d. 1131 / 1718), the father of Shah Waliullah and a prominent scholar of his time. He was on the committee that was set up by Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb Aalamgir to constitute Islamic Law in form of a book, which is now renowned as 'Fatawa Aalamgiri'. Earlier, this madrasa was in "Mehdiyan" locality. When the crowd of students from all over India began to reach there it fell short of land. So, the then Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah (1718-1748), famous for his overdrinking as *Rangila*, granted a land for the purpose. This madrasa was destined to become an ideal and pioneer for all the Islamic institutions all across Indian subcontinent and a good part of the Central Asia. When the sun of Ilm-e-Hadith (Science of Tradition of Prophet) was setting in the Arabia, Shah Waliullah and his sons, Shah Abdul Aziz, Shah Rafiuddin, Shah Abdul Qadir, Shah Abdul Gani, Shah Ishaq and others, not only kept it shining but also spread its light throughout the subcontinent and even beyond. Later, after the migration of Shah Abdul Gani to Makkah, Darul Uloom Deoband succeeded him and undertook the responsibility to spread it. Herewith, began a new era, students from all over Asia and some other continents came to learn Hadith in this grand institution. In this way, Madrasa Rahimia became the mother of all madrasas existing on the soil of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The pre-1857's academic world totally belongs to Shah Waliullah and his family. This family has rendered so



fantastic services to Islamic studies that have no precedence in the past. Maulana Nazeer Ahmad Muhaddis Dehlawi has rightly said in the preface of his *Tarjamat-ul-Quran* as writes Khalique Ahmad Nizami:

He and his family have served Islam in India as the early Muslims in Arabia". Today's religious institutions of India owe to the efforts of Shah Waliullah, directly or indirectly, and get light from the candle he lit.<sup>102</sup>

Khalique Ahmad Nizami has the same feeling as he asserts in his famous book *Tarikh Mashaekh Chisht*:

Madrasa Rahimia, Madrasa Bazaar Khanam and Madrasa Ajmeri Gate were the fountainheads of knowledge and education before 1857. Though Delhi had countless institutions but these three madrasas had a distinguished identity. They played a key role to set right the religious life of Muslims. Madrasa Rahimia was the centre of the movement to revive the Islamic studies. The existing institutions of today's India take their roots from this very Madrasa. When Muslims were going religiously lifeless, the teachers of this Madrasa strived hard to restore Islamic feelings and inject religious spirit inside them.<sup>103</sup>

Sheikh Muhammad Ikram's impressions are as follows:

Luckily, Islam has no separate National Church system in any country, but it accepts historic, racial and linguistic influences of different countries. Shiites progressed in Iran while Wahhabies in Najd. Some countries followed Shafai Fiqh while some other adopted Hanafi or Hanbali fiqh. According to this point of view, Shah Waliullah set up the religious tendencies and general religious system of Indian Muslims. If any one deserves to be called the founder of common religious system it is certainly Shah Waliullah Muhaddis Dehlawi.<sup>104</sup>

102. Khalique Ahmad Nizami, *Tarikh Maqalat*, pp. 241, 243.

103. *Ibid*, *Tarikh-e-Mashaikh-e-Chisht*, p. 344.

104. Shaikh Ikram, *Rood-e-Kausar*, p. 586.

## 4

### EXISTING SYSTEM OF MADRASA EDUCATION

Presently, there are four types of Islamic educational institutions prevailing all over India: (i) Maktab, (ii) Madrasa, (iii) Jamia and (iv) Darul Qur'an. But in common all are called as madrasa.

1. **Maktab:** When a child grows he goes to Maktab where he is taught basic Islamic tenets with fundamentals of Math, Geography, Science, Social Science, Qur'an, Urdu, Hindi, English and regional language. It is, generally, of 5-year course. The child may pass easily the course up to 12 of his age. After that some students go either to school or to Madrasa. In states like UP, Bihar and Bengal, the system is the same. But in some other states there is morning and evening maktab where the school going boys and girls go and learn Qur'an, Urdu and basic tenet books. As I know in Kerala and Assam there is a good system where maktab work outside of normal school hours. They function between 7 am and 9 am in the morning and between 6 pm and 8 pm in the evening. Mostly the maktab are run by the Muslims of locality. They bear the expenses of management and salary that is

paid to teachers. Usually, the teachers at maktab are poorly paid since most of them are local and not highly educated. Maktab offer education to both boys and girls simultaneously.

2. **Madrasa:** It means a building and boarding rooms where Muslim students having passed Maktab course are taught Aalimiat course. This course is generally of 8 years while some madrasas have shortened one year. Every madrasa does not have the 8-year course, but commonly, madrasas have 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7-year course then they send the students to complete graduation to big madrasas like Darul Uloom Deoband, Mazahir Uloom Saharanpur, Darul Uloom Nadwah Lucknow, Jamia Salafia Banaras, Alfalah Bilariaganj, Ashrafia Mubarakpur and others. Because the final year of this course that is called "Daura-e-Hadith" is taught in very few madrasas of the country. In the first year of madrasa the student is taught Persian language for having better knowledge of Urdu because Urdu is dominated by Persian words. Urdu is commonly the medium of madrasa education all over the country whether the madrasa is in Gujarat, Bengal, Assam or Kerala.
3. **Jamia:** The term "Jamia" is basically a synonym word for university. Though there are many madrasas, which are named as Jamia, but in fact, only some madrasas of the country deserve to be called as Jamia. A madrasa that enjoys Daura-e-Hadith course along with specialization courses like Arabic literature course, Ifta course, Tafseer course, Islamic studies course and Tajweed (Sab'a and Ashra) are basically Jamia. Many people do not care and name their maktab and madrasas with Jamia that some times creates problem. In fact, only madrasas like Darul Uloom Deoband, Nadwatul Ulama etc. should be called Jamia.

4. **Darul Qur'an:** There are some other madrasas made especially for Hifz and Tajweed (memorizing the Glorious Qur'an by heart and learning the art of reciting the Glorious Qur'an in ten different ways). These madrasas are called Darul Qur'an or Daruttahfiz etc. There is no fixed duration for Hifz (remembering the Glorious Qur'an by heart). It depends on the student. Nevertheless, the Tajweed course (learning the art of reciting the Glorious Qur'an in ten different ways) is of 3 years. There are some short-term courses in Tajweed in which the student learns the rules and regulations of pronouncing and articulating the Glorious Qur'an.

Madrasas in India are, mostly, run by donations from Muslim community and even some receive foreign donations also. Madrasas operate from *Shawwal* (10th month of Islamic Hijra Calendar) to *Ramazan* (9th month of Hijra). Thus are open for 10 months. They observe very less holidays; only on Friday in a week, on 26th January, 15 August and 10 leave on *Idul Azha* (*Baqraid*, Muslim Festival in which they perform animal sacrifice). They observe big vacation from late of *Shaban* (8th Hijra month) to the half of *Shawwal*; nearly 40-45 days. It is not so that during the vacation days madrasas are closed at all, many madrasas have a good number of students who do not go home and students who come before time to seek enrolment in the respective madrasa. Therefore it will not be unreasonable to say that madrasas serve as orphanages also where poor and orphans get education besides every thing they need. Between this duration the teachers, some students, in many madrasas, and donation collectors set out to collect donations for next year.

Madrasas, apart from free education, provide the students with free food, free lodge and other facilities like clothe, medicine, shoes and so on if they need. The students in madrasas are commonly from poor and middle class families. Still there are many students whose parents manage



to pay for their food and lodge, but this amount is very low in comparison to modern institutions. The teachers are paid their salary from the donations the madrasas collect. The ratio of their salary ranges from Rs. 2500 to 4000.

Generally, there are madrasas for boys only. Yet there are madrasas for girls also, but very few compared to boys'. Mostly madrasas have boarding rooms. The local students frequent while the students from distant places stay at madrasas. The classes start from morning 6-8 as per the season and last up to noon. After taking the lunch students and teachers take siesta for a while. Then go for Zuhr Salah, afternoon prayer. After the Salah the classes start up to Asr Salah, one and a half hour before the sunset. During this time they stroll and play. After sunset, they pray Maghrib Salah and then get busy in study and revise collectively or individually what they learn in the day until they are called for Isha prayer. They take dinner either after Maghrib or before Isha. After the prayer, some even go for study and some go to bed. Early in the morning they wake up for Fajr prayer.

The students as well as teachers in classes sit on mats on floor having desks before them. They do not use chair and table. Students open their books before teacher and one of them or all by turn read the text of the book. The teacher corrects the grammatical and pronunciation mistakes if any and then translates the text in to Urdu with detailed explanation. Some students make notes of what the teacher explain. In the meantime, if there is any doubt or question into the student's mind he puts it. The students are asked to read the text and understand as per they can and attend classes with good preparation. After that the students among themselves revise the lesson.

Madrasas, in general, hold two examinations during a year. For the secondary classes they manage monthly tests. For the first year they give oral examination while for other classes they arrange writing examination. Usually the

students write their papers in Urdu, but still there is a good number of such students who write their paper in Arabic. Writing papers in Arabic is encouraged in madrasas and students who write Arabic are given 5 marks extra. Usually in madrasas' examination, papers there are 5 questions from different places of text book and the student has to answer out of the 5. One paper bears 50 marks, in some madrasas 20 and even in some 100.

Generally students complete their madrasa course in their teenage. From there they go in different fields. Some help their fathers or brothers in business and even some go for further modern studies. Some are appointed at madrasas for teaching managing and other purposes while some become Imam in mosques where they lead the congregation of prayer and deliver sermons. There are some places where there is Islamic Judicial system, some become Qazi there to settle issues related to Muslim Personal Law between two parties. Those who are interested in writing they join newspapers or magazines. Likewise, students who knew good Arabic and learn art of translation they join companies especially of Gulf as translator. The students who learn calligraphy, computer or handicrafts they have business of the same on part time basis. Some arrange small type of business while they teach or work at a madrasa. The advantage of madrasa education is that those who are graduated from there though are less paid, but they never go wandering in the streets in search job and employment like those of modern institutions' graduates. They are satisfied with what they learn in term of matter and spirituality.

#### NUMBER OF MADRASAS IN INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

##### **Number of Madrasas in India**

Here is also a mystery regarding the number of madrasas that ranges from some hundreds to 25,000. But what is the

truth it can never be known exactly since none has surveyed all the madrasas of the country and collected the information. After all some surveys have been conducted by renowned organizations like Hamdard Education Foundation, Institute of Objective Studies, National Council for Educational Research Training (NCERT) etc. According to the Third All India Educational Survey conducted by the NCERT, until December 1973 there were only 1033 madrasas in the country. In another Directory of Madrasas in India published by the Centre for Promotion of Science established in 1985 at Aligarh Muslim University a comprehensive list of 2890 madrasas has been produced. The Institute of Objective Studies also conducted a broad based survey of madrasas where only around 500 madrasas found mentioning. The Union Minister for Human Resource Development Madhav Rao Scindia in his address to the Muslim Education Conference held in Delhi in 1995 however claimed that there are twelve thousand madrasas in the country. According to Home Ministry:

Minister of State for Home Vidyasagar Rao said in Parliament on 19 March that the government is thinking of enacting a new law to 'check foreign contributions and their utilization by madrasas and other organizations'. In the same speech he conceded that the 'government has not yet carried out any survey on foreign funding to these institutions in the border areas of the country'. He also disclosed that there were 31,850 madrasas in the country and that 11,453 were in the border areas. He added that 'Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence was trying to exploit and mislead students of these institutions.'<sup>105</sup>

According to a Saba Naqvi outlook and Yoginder Sikand:

Although no regular census of madrasas has ever taken place, government sources estimate there are

105. *The Telegraph*, 20 March 2002, Kolkata.

approximately 25,000 such full-fledged institutes in the country. Besides, there are about 80,000 maktabas, rudimentary schools, often located within mosques, which provide primary education.<sup>106</sup>

The 1980s witnessed a rapid revival of the madrasas in much of South Asia, in terms of numbers as well as power and influence. In India, the number of madrasas is now estimated at some thirty-four thousand, with a similar figure in Pakistan and probably a slightly smaller number in Bangladesh.<sup>107</sup>

States like UP, Bihar, Gujarat, Bengal etc. have most of the independent madrasas. While UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and some others have madrasa boards that are recognized and run by the concerning state governments. But their number in each state does not exceed hundreds. As in West Bengal, which is the pioneer in the field of recognized madrasas, there are only 507 aided madrasas.

The history of madrasas in the state (Bengal) dates back to 1780, when Governor General Warren Hastings sanctioned money to establish a madrasa. By 1977, when the Left Front came to power, there were 238 madrasas in the state. The number has now more than doubled to 507. The annual budgetary allocation for madrasa education, which was Rs. 5 lakh in 1977, has grown to Rs. 120 crore. Even the chief minister is unsure about the number of non-affiliated madrasas. "In some bordering districts like Nadia, Murshidabad and Malda, every mosque has a madrasa attached to it. No one knows how they are run," said a senior police officer.<sup>108</sup>

106. Saba Naqvi Bhaumik (2001), "Old-School Ties", *Outlook*, 31 December, New Delhi.

107. Yoginder Sikand (2002), *Madrasas in a Morass: Between Medievalism and Muslimophobia - I*, 19 June, [www.ercwilcom.net](http://www.ercwilcom.net).

108. Kartikeya Sharma, "Blind Faith", *The Week*, 24 February, 2002.



Here every one comes with a figure but the truth is that none has surveyed all the madrasas existing in the country. Mostly what people say is conjecture, except some organizations, which put some exact figure, but they also could not cover each and every madrasas in different parts of the country. According to Muhammad Akhtar Siddiqui there is an extensive need to conduct an all-round and broad based survey of these madrasas:

The vast variation noticed in the figures of madrasas quoted by different groups and responsible persons clearly indicate that so far no comprehensive and scientific effort has been made at any level to compile reliable data on the number of different types of madrasas scattered in every nook and corner of the country, and thus it also indicates the urgency to undertake such an exercise in the first priority as this immensely help in all kinds of future planning for the benefit of madrasas.<sup>109</sup>

However, it would be imperative to mention that the Indian subcontinent has witnessed a rapid growth in the number of madrasas during the past two decades. But it does not mean that they have come up in thousands and thousands. One thing we have to take into consideration is that there are two types of religious institutions, madrasa and maktab. Madrasas are meant for higher study of Islamic sciences while maktabas are meant for rudimentary and basic Islamic education for young Muslim children. Maktabas, in many parts of the country, have a good mixture of basic religious as well as secular education. Maktabas need not a separate building; it may be attached to mosque or in a corner of a house. The number of maktabas is no doubt in thousands since many localities like blocs and towns having considerable Muslim population have maktab. The Dini Talimi Council

109. Muhammad Akhtar Siddiqui, "Expansion in Madrasa Education", *Education & Muslims in India since Independence*, p. 75.

of UP that has the best maktab education programme, operates such 37,000 maktabas only in UP. As far as the matter of madrasas is concerned they require separate building, a set of teachers, classrooms etc. that are commonly difficult to manage. Yet, the madrasas that provide the students with *Fazil* degree are quite in a few hundreds. Many madrasas organize only *Hifz* classes while most of them teach *Fazilat* course only up to 2-3-4 classes. That is why the havoc that is created, particularly by some Hindu organizations and sympathetic intellectuals, about the growing number of madrasas is politically motivated. And their objections are based on prejudices. For example the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bangladesh border areas are said to have major growing numbers, they have so much madrasas:

"There are 955 mosques and 445 madrasas in the border districts of the northeastern states."<sup>110</sup>

"There are 208 madrasas on the Indian side of West Bengal-Bangladesh border."<sup>111</sup>

"There are 343 mosques and 384 madrasas on the Indian side of the Indo-Nepal border."<sup>112</sup>

Interestingly in these extracts, mosques have also been mentioned. The number of all the madrasas mentioned referred above is only 1037 in the areas, which are called to have major growing madrasas. But it is too not clear whether the institutions that have been mentioned as madrasas are really madrasas or most of them are maktabas. It is also important to recall that the above mentioned border areas have large Muslim population and most of them are economically weak and politically excluded community. As a result, the weaker section prefers to educated their children

110. Kartikeya Sharma (2002), "Blind Faith", *The Week*, 24 February.

111. *Ibid.*

112. *Ibid.*

in such a place whose it would get education with little economic investment.

### Number of Madrasas in Pakistan

About the number of madrasas in Pakistan also, there are conflicting reports in media. According to a survey conducted in 1972, there were 893 madrasas in the country. The report got details about 779 madrasas, of them Punjab had 580, Sindh 72, Baluchistan 23 and Sarhad 104 madrasas. The report could not get information about 114 madrasas scattered in Pakistan.<sup>113</sup> Look at some of the observations. The present number of madrasas according to International Herald Tribune and Newsday is 6-8 thousand: But as part of a crackdown on Islamic militants, Pakistan's President, General Pervez Musharraf, announced new measures last month to rein in the estimated 6,000 to 8,000 madrasas, particularly what he called the minority of such religious schools that "propagate hatred and violence" and produce only "semiliterate religious scholars."<sup>114</sup> Although madrasas exist throughout the Muslim world, those in Pakistan — about 8,000, with more than a million students — have extra political clout because of their number and size. Many of that nation's madrasas, in fact, were established with money from the Taliban.<sup>115</sup>

While the estimation of Thomas L. Friedman (*New York Times*) and Yoginder Sikand goes to 30-40 thousand. In 1978 there were 3,000 madrasas in Pakistan; today there are 39,000.<sup>116</sup> The 1980s witnessed a rapid revival of the

113. Mufti Taqi Usmani, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, p. 79, Deoband.

114. *International Herald Tribune* (2002), "Asians take a closer look at Islamic schools", Michael Richardson, a senior Asia-Pacific correspondent, 12 February.

115. Arnold Abrams, *Schools Sow the Seeds of Hate*, staff writer, *www.newsday.com*.

116. Thomas L. Friedman (2001), "Pakistan: It's Jihad", p. 101, *New York Times*, 13 November.

madrasas in much of South Asia, in terms of numbers as well as power and influence. In India, the number of madrasas is now estimated at some thirty-forty thousand, with a similar figure in Pakistan and probably a slightly smaller number in Bangladesh.<sup>117</sup>

Here is another opinion from one Pakistani writer:

Pakistan is a purely Islamic country and is known as the "Fortress of Islam". About 98 per cent of the population is Muslim. The concept of madrasas also exists in Pakistan. There are more than 15000 madrasa schools in Pakistan and about one million students are studying there. Furthermore there are about 2512 madrasas in Punjab Province, the most populous province out of the four provinces of Pakistan.

### Number of Madrasas in Bangladesh

Bangladesh, though a tiny but having the third largest Muslim population in the world, has independent madrasas like those of India and Pakistan. But the certain numbers about the madrasas existing in the country could not be found since there also no full-fledged survey has been arranged. The 1980s witnessed a rapid revival of the madrasas in much of South Asia, in terms of numbers as well as power and influence. In India, the number of madrasas is now estimated at some thirty-forty thousand, with a similar figure in Pakistan and probably a slightly smaller number in Bangladesh.<sup>118</sup> Statistics show that a total of 64 thousand madrasas, of varying kinds, exist in Bangladesh alone. Till 1999, there were a total of 7,122 registered madrasas running

117. Yoginder Sikand (2002), *Madrasas in a Morass: Between Medievalism and Muslimophobia - I*, 19 June.

118. Kashif Iqbal Buttar, *Madrasa Schools in Pakistan*, pp. 299, Lynn Leonard.

119. Yoginder Sikand, *Ibid*.



with grants from the government, including three full-fledged government ones.<sup>120</sup>

### Number of Madrasas in Nepal & Philippine

Nepal, the Himalayan neighboring kingdom and only Hindu country in the world, has a good number of Muslims most of whom are inhabited on the border areas touching Indian side. Because of the open border like other Nepalese Muslims also have direct links with Indian contemporaries. The Muslims in Nepal have opened madrasas to provide their children with religious education. According to The Katmandu Post there are about 500 madrasas in Nepal: According to Ministry of Education and Sports officials, there are about 500 madrasas in the country, mostly in the Terai belt.<sup>121</sup>

While the border areas, that are said to be the most sensitive, according to *The Week* have only 195 madrasas: There are 343 mosques and 384 madrasas on the Indian side of the Indo-Nepal border and 291 mosques and 195 madrasas on the Nepal side.<sup>122</sup>

Here is a report in International Herald Tribune that claims that Philippine has 1500 madrasas: Basically, the children are taught to fight for Islam," said one official in the Catholic-dominated Philippines, which has around 1,500 madrasas for its Muslim minority.<sup>123</sup> This French media has completely ignored to mention the view and will of Philippines Muslims which finally cannot be taken as a fair assessment.

As far as I think, the same misunderstanding is here also as it is with madrasas in other parts of South Asia. The

120. Salahuddin Babar, *Madrasas: In Focus*, [www.bccbd.org](http://www.bccbd.org).

121. "Muslim Group Blasts Govt. Move to Regulate Madrasas", *The Katmandu Post*, 2 February, 2002, Katmandu, Nepal.

122. Kartikeya Sharma (2002), "Blind Faith", *The Week*, 24 February.

123. Michael Richardson (2002), "Asians Take a Closer Look at Islamic Schools", *International Herald Tribune*, 12 February.

difference between madrasa and maktab is not known to most of the people. Wherever Muslims live they give their young children basic Islamic education, mostly on part time basis, like reading of the Glorious Qur'an and other fundamentals of religion. While madrasas are like colleges having buildings, boarding rooms, kitchen, full time teachers etc. Usually of the maktab are financed by local Muslims and even some times any single person bears the expenses while it is quite unusual that a single person or only people of locality fund a madrasa since it requires a good deal of money.

### Madrasas in Other Parts of the World

Though every Muslim country and Muslim minority in the entire world has somehow or the other arrangements for religious education for Muslim children, but it is not necessarily called madrasa system or maktab system as it is in South Asia. After all, the madrasa system that is originated from Deoband is found in many parts of the world. Since Darul Uloom Deoband had students from Afghanistan, Burma, South Africa, Central Asia Malaysia, Indonesia and even Arab, so they carried the spirit to set up a madrasa wherever they moved, as it is the characteristic of the institution. That is why we see that madrasas sprung up in every part of the world where the students of Darul Uloom Deoband went. Today, there are many madrasas in Afghanistan, Central Asia, South Africa, Britain, USA, etc. which claim to belong to Deoband.

### THE CURRICULA OF MADRASAS IN INDIA

It is impossible to make any generalized statement about the Madrasa curriculum, as every Madrasa follows its own pattern in the matter of curriculum. There is no uniformity with regard to subjects, books or emphasis. Secondly, there is also no uniformity regarding the number of years for

preparing students for the various degrees as different madrasas follow their own time-span of studies. Naturally, in this scenario, it is difficult to find any pattern of uniformity.

### **Darul Uloom Deoband**

Darul Uloom has a comprehensive syllabus that is not exactly Dars-e-Nizami, but a mixture of three educational institutions that existed in the nearer past. As Sayyid Mahboob Rizvi, the author of *Tarikh Darul Uloom Deoband* recalls:

The Indian subcontinent enjoyed three centres of education in the middle of thirteenth Hijra century. Madrasa Rahimia of Shah Waliullah in Delhi, Ferangi Mahal of Mulla Nizam in Lucknow and Madrasa of Allama Fazal-e-Haq in Khairabad. The syllabus of the three centres was common, but they had different viewpoints. Shah Waliullah's successors paid special attention to Tafseer and Hadith. Logic and philosophy were like secondary subjects to them. The Ulama of Ferangi Mahal attached exclusive importance to Fiqh and Usul-e-Fiqh while Khairabad was renowned for Logic and philosophy. All the madrasas of that time hailed to any of the three. The revolution of 1857 swept all of them away except Ferangi Mahal in Lucknow. It held itself alive and exists even today as a relic of the elders.

After the storm when the calm returned, Darul Uloom Deoband stood to treasure the dignity and grandeur of Muslim history. The most important question that it faced was about the syllabus. It tried to assimilate the characteristics of the three centres of learning.

Darul Uloom Deoband not only protected the greatness of the subjects but also it played a key role to advance them. It has prepared a mixed syllabus that has the characteristics of the three centres and is applied by the majority of madrasas. Darul Uloom has brought about some changes in view of the changing requirements and

needs of the hour. It did not reject the financial aspect of education as it attempted to go with the age.<sup>124</sup>

Thus Darul Uloom does not believe that it follows Dars-e-Nizami and it is somehow true. The Sihah Sitta (six most authentic books of Hadith) were not a part of Dars-e-Nizami, but Darul Uloom included it as it was taught in Madrasa Rahimia. After all, it tried to assimilate the characteristics of the three syllabi.

Darul Uloom Deoband's present syllabus is of four phases; primary, middle, high and specialization. Specialization course is not compulsory. If the student is interested he can further acquire expertise in any specific field after passing *Fazilat*. It takes eight year to become *Fazil*. These four phases are for students who like for *Fazilat* student. A student who wants to go through this course he has first to study one-year course named as Darja-e-Farsi. In this year students are taught Persian, Mathematics, Geography, Hindi, English and Arabic Grammar.

It is probably known that Darul Uloom has the largest informal affiliated madrasas to its pattern; so naturally, its syllabus is followed basically by madrasas in India as well as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal etc. Though there are some madrasas that follow their own pattern in term of duration and syllabus books but after all there are very minor differences. Mazahir Uloom Saharanpur, which is considered one of the three great madrasas of India, also follows Darul Uloom Deoband's type of pattern.

### **Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow**

The Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama concentrated particularly on the Holy Qur'an and introduced it into syllabus. Full attention was paid to the Arabic language since it held the key to the understanding of the Glorious Quran and the Sunnah. The Darul Uloom thus, included Arabic in its

124. *Tarikh Darul Uloom Deoband*, Vol. 2, pp. 268-69.



syllabus both as a classical and a modern language. The Nadwatul Ulama also brought about certain far-reaching changes in the traditional curriculum of the Arabic madrasas of India in the context of the changed circumstances and needs of the age. Some of the medieval sciences, which had lost their utility in the present times, were excluded from the curriculum. A large part of the scholastic sciences, that had grown out-of-date and had ceased to have any value owing to the disappearance of those sects and philosophical disputes were discarded and in its place certain modern sciences and languages were introduced.

The Darul Uloom provides education at all stages ranging from the primary to the university stage in the theological branches of learning and Arabic literature. In all it covers a period of sixteen years. The Primary Stage covers a period of six years (including pre-primary classes) and provides elementary instruction in Urdu, Hindi and English as well as Arithmetic, Geography, General Science, etc., which covers the entire field of primary education as prescribed for secular schools besides giving a sound religious base to it.

The Secondary Stage is a three-year course. Besides English, this stage provides for a thorough grounding in Persian as well as Arabic Grammar, Literature and Composition. Higher Secondary Stage is two-year course comprising ninth and tenth year of the curriculum imparts instruction in Arabic, Persian and English besides religious sciences and Islamic history. Graduation (Alimiyat) Stage, a four-year course, which is equivalent to the graduation course under western system of education, offers instruction in the commentary of the Qur'an (Tafsir), Traditions (Hadith), Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh) besides Arabic literature and other branches of Islamic learning. Higher efficiency in Arabic literature and the knowledge of English equivalent to the Intermediate standard of the UP Board of High School and Intermediate Education, are the special features of this stage.

**Post-Graduate (Fazilat) Stage:** This is a two-year course providing instruction in Arabic literature and Islamic branches of learning. The latter comprise Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh and Shari'ah, of which one subject has to be offered by the students for intensive study. The students have also to submit a thesis in the subject of their choice. Two more courses viz. Comparative Religions and Islamic Dawah have been started shortly. Facilities are also provided for undertaking research, known as *Takmil*, in the subjects taught at *Fazilat* stage in the Nadwatul 'Ulama. The duration of the research being normally two years, it is conducted under the guidance of competent teachers.

This pattern is followed in madrasas that are attached to Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, though they are very few in number. All Jamat Islami and Ahl Hadith madrasas more or less follow Nadwa type of education system and are not worth mentioning separately. While the all Brailwi madrasas also do not have any distinguished pattern and follow modified Dars-e-Nizami.

### **Jamat Islami Madrasas and their Pattern of Teaching**

In this post-independence period many madrasas having their allegiance either to Darul Uloom Deoband pattern of curriculum i.e. Dars-e-Nizami or to Nadwa curriculum have been founded but a majority of these new ones again belongs to Deoband school. After 1948, a large number of maktabas and madrasas have also been opened under the aegis of Jamat e Islami Hind following their own pattern of curriculum, which was first experimented in Markazi Darsgah-e-Islami at Rampur in 1949. Jamiatul Falah at Bilariaganj, Jamiatul Huda at Malegaon, Ilamaia Arabic College at Mansoor and hundreds of other similar madrasas founded across the country follow the Darsgah-e-Islami pattern. The curriculum is divided into two major parts. The first part of eight years duration includes subjects like Islamiyat, Nazira Quran, Arabic, Urdu, English, Hindi, Mathematics, General

Knowledge, History, Geography etc., and the second part of seven years duration includes Talimul Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, Usul-e-Fiqh, Arabic Literature, English, Political Science, Economics, Education etc. A number of madrasas following this curriculum prepare their students simultaneously for both a modern degree examination and for the madrasa examination for the degree of Aalimiat, Fazeelat etc. A close perusal of these curricula reveals that they have a close resemblance with the Nadwa curriculum and thus cannot be termed as distinct pattern, which should form a separate school of thought or a separate movement, as was the case with Deoband and Nadwa.<sup>125</sup>

#### **Jamiatul Hidayah at Jaipur: A Third Type of Madrasa**

To enable students to meet these realities of life, in 1986, came up a new institution at Jaipur called Jamiatul Hidayah, which, in fact, signified the third and latest trend in the madrasa curriculum. Mohammad Fazlur Rahman Mujaddidi, rector of the same madrasa, says that Jamiatul Hidayah is not just an institution rather it is a movement in itself, which pursues the objectives of safeguarding Islamic values and traditions, propagation and dissemination of religious sciences, and the teaching and training of Muslims in modern sciences and industrial and technical trades for their all round development.

Education in this madrasa begins at the upper primary stage i.e. from class VI or from the 10/11 years and continues for a period of nine years divided in to two levels of Sanwi and Aali of four and five years duration respectively. The Sanwi courses include both religious and modern subjects and they are so framed that in case a student after having studied these courses does not wish

125. Muhammad Akhtar Siddiqui, "Developments and Trends in Madrasa Education", *Education & Muslims in India since Independence*, p. 83, 1998, IOS, Delhi.

to pursue his education in the Jamia he is able to seek admission in a modern education institution. The subjects included in the Aalia courses are Tafseer, Hadith, Fiqh, Arabic Language and Literature, Hindi, English, Social Sciences and intensive technical training in one of the three disciplines namely, Computer Application, Welder cum-Fitter and Electrician cum-wireman. In the Jamia the standard of teaching of modern sciences is equivalent to a graduation level course and that of technical education to a certificate level course. The accent on the technical education in the curriculum has made the Jamia distinct from the other two groups of madrasas led by Deoband and Nadwa. Owing to its utility and relevance to the present day circumstances, the Jamiatul Hidayah curriculum has begun to be followed by other madrasas. Madrasa Falah-e-Darain at Turkesar in Surat and Jamia Sabilus Salam at Barkus in Hyderabad are the two latest examples of the madrasas, which have followed Jamia Hidayah pattern of curriculum in the recent past."<sup>126</sup>

Thus, at present three distinct patterns of curriculum are being followed in the madrasas of the country and each pattern is being separately led by Darul Uloom Deoband, Nadwatul Ulama and Jamiatul Hidayah.

#### **Madrasa Education Boards**

As far as the matter of above-mentioned madrasas was concerned they were autonomous madrasas that are run by donations. Yet, there are some madrasas in every part of the country, which are affiliated to Madrasa Boards and are financed by state governments. Madrasa Aliya in Kolkata, is the first example of such madrasas, which was started by the British regime in 1780. Since all old madrasas were shut

126. Muhammad Akhtar Siddiqui (1998) "Developments and Trends in Madrasa Education", *Education & Muslims in India since Independence*, pp. 83, 84, IOS, Delhi.



down and the government needed to produce some clergymen to interpret the rulers among the subjects. The Aliya system is a popular system, which is now followed by a large number of madrasas in Bengal as well as in Bangladesh:

Under the Aliya madrasa system, a student takes 15 years to complete his education from the primary education till the end of school. A student studies for five years at the primary or ebtedayi level. After four years at the secondary level, as student appears for an examination and is given a Dakhil certificate. This is equivalent to SSC. In this exam, 400 marks are attributed to Arabic, religious theory and other Islamic subjects, while the remaining 600 marks are for English, math, science, history, etc. After this, another two years of education leads to the Alem exam, equivalent to HSC. Following two years of study after the Alem exam, one takes the Fazil exam, equivalent to the Bachelor's degree of secular education. Then there is the Kamil exam after another two years and this is the highest degree of education under the madrasa system. Students of madrasas prepare themselves for employment in government and private jobs like any other college or university student. Under the private Madrasa Board, students take 16 years to complete their education from class one till the end of school. From Class I till VIII, students are taught various Islamic subjects, English, math and Bengali. After this English, Bangla and other subjects are dropped. Class IX and X are termed as Sanavia Amma and Class XI and XII as Sanavia Walia. Class XIII and XIV are called Fazilat while XV and XVI are termed as Kamil. It is not possible for students graduating from this system to join the mainstream workforce, as they cannot really pass any competitive exam. They do not study the general subjects and their degree has no government recognition. They

normally become Imams, Muazzens of mosques or teachers at the non-government madrasas."<sup>127</sup>

Madrasa Aliya of Kolkata introduced the concept of affiliation of madrasas to a central body. Madrasa Aliya is unique in the sense that it is not only a teaching institution but it is also an affiliation body for the various large and small madrasas in Bengal. Till date, Madrasa Aliya continues to be a teaching as well as an affiliating body.

After Aliya system of madrasas there is a developed and better-organized system in Bihar that is run by Shamsul Huda Madrasa Board under state government sponsorship. The curriculum of Bihar Madrasa Education Board, which is better, organized and standardized, entails 17 years of study for the degree of Fazil, which is equivalent to M.A. The first and the primary stage, called 'Tahtania' is equivalent to primary education of general schools and has a schooling period of four years. The middle stage, i.e. 'Wastania' takes another four years. It may be noted here that madrasa students take 8 years to complete the level of Middle School as compared to seven years in general schools. It is only reasonable because there are a few additional subjects in madrasa curriculum. The High School stage, which is called 'Foqania', is equivalent to the secondary school examination of the general schools. The fourth stage i.e. 'moulvi' requires two more years after 'Foqania' a student passing the moulvi examination after 12 years of schooling was equivalent to intermediate. Three more years after Moulvi prepared a student for the degree of Aalim which was equivalent to B.A. As mentioned above, two more prepared a student for the degree of Fazil, which was equivalent to M.A. Thus, according to this curriculum, 17 years of schooling in the madrasa prepared a student for the highest degree of Fazil. The Madrasa Board also provides for transfer of madrasa boys to the general schools at various stages. For example a

127. Salahuddin Babar, *Madrasas: In Focus*, [www.bccbd.org](http://www.bccbd.org).

student having completed Wastania could join a high school of general educational system.

There are madrasa boards in some other states also which are somehow or the other same as states M. Akhtar Siddiqui:

In the last fifty years, Madrasa Education Boards have come up in Assam, Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. In Bihar, about 1600 Madrasas are affiliated to Bihar Madrasa Education Board, in Orissa 79 Madrasas are affiliated to Orissa Madrasa Board, in UP 375 madrasas are affiliated to UP Madrasa Education Board, and in West Bengal more than 400 madrasas are affiliated to the abovementioned board. Unlike these states, in Assam, madrasas are directly affiliated to the State Board of Secondary and Senior Secondary Education. Similarly, in Maharashtra some have got themselves recognized by the Maharashtra Board of Secondary Education and their students appear in the common SSC Examination of the Board. The certificates issued by all the abovementioned Board are recognized and enable the certificate holder to higher modern education also. The teachers of madrasa board's affiliated madrasas usually get their salary from the respective boards.<sup>128</sup>

### Deeni Talimi Council

Though the country has been declared secular by the constitution, yet in many states, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, school textbooks predominantly include the lessons, which are against fundamentals of Islam and full of Hindu mythological stories, which do have a deep impact on the tender and immature minds of the youngsters in the impressionable age. Sensing the above dangers Muslim

128. Muhammad Akhtar Siddiqui (1998), "Developments and Trends in Madrasa Education", *Education & Muslims in India since Independence*, p. 78, Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi.

leaders and Ulama of Darul Uloom Deoband, Nadwa, Saharanpur, Braily, Aligarh, Jamia Millia, Jamiatul Ulama Hind, Jamat Islami and learned teachers of all Muslim schools and colleges participated in provincial Deeni Talimi Conference held on 30, 31 December 1959 and Deeni Talimi Council, Uttar Pradesh, a non-affiliating non-examining supervisory sort of voluntary organization, was founded to establish maktabs (primary schools) in every nook and corner of the state to impart Deeni Talim (fundamentals of Islam) and reading of the Glorious Quran (Nazira) along with the modern education up to class V so that in the impressionable age a Muslim child may learn the fundamentals of Islam and his faith in oneness of Allah and Prophet Muhammad's teachings stick to his mind to such an extent that throughout his life he may not be led astray by the cultural and mythological of onslaught of another religion in schools and colleges of the state.

A central office of Deeni Talimi Council was established in Lucknow with its branches in about 48 districts of Uttar Pradesh known as Anjuman Talimat-e-Deen. Since its inception this council is functioning under the chairmanship of Maulana Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Rector of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow. For the last 42 years Deeni Talimi Council has been active in the field of education, both religious and modern. In spite of the limited financial resources, it has been popularising the educational movement to save the new generation of the Muslim Youths for falling prey to un-Islamic trends and thoughts. Deeni Talimi Council through its 20,000 independent and self supporting maktabs (Primary schools) all over the state has played a great role in inculcating and promoting Islamic ethos among the Muslim children and in making them retaining firmly their religious identity. Maulana Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi has rightly claimed in one of his presidential addresses: "After Khilafat movement in India no other better movement except the



movement of Deeni Talimi Council has come into being for Muslims."<sup>129</sup>

The main feature of this educational movement is that it has always been above the differences of Maslak and Fiqah and tried to unite all Muslims in the field of education. That is why this movement has gained universal popularity among Muslims in UP and its activities have been extended to some other states as well. Similarly, in Bihar there is Madaris-e-Islami Council, which voluntarily oversees the activity of the attached madrasas in Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. There are about 13,000 more primary and secondary level institutions scattered in different parts of the country, which operate either under the auspices of Jamat e Islami Hind or on the lines of the curriculum developed by the Jamat. The curriculum of these institutions is a rich synthesis of Islamic and modern education.<sup>130</sup>

### Madrasas for Girls

In medieval period we find traces of some rulers having taken interests in the education of girls on Islamic lines. For example, Sultan Jalaluddin of Hinwar (1433-1456) had founded 23 madrasas exclusively for girls in his capital. While Firoz Shah established schools for girls. As the world-renowned globe-trotter, Ibn Batuta, describing a place Hanor in South India (now a Tehsil in Maharashtra state), has written: "Many women here know the Qur'an by heart and I saw thirteen schools for girls in this city." Similarly Shah Jahan also had founded a big madrasa for girls in Fatehpur Sikri called Madrasa Banat. An encouraging aspect of the

129. H.U. Azami, "Contribution of Deeni Talimi Council to Muslim Education in Uttar Pradesh", *Education & Muslims in India since Independence*, pp. 147-48, IOS, Delhi.

130. Muhammad Akhtar Siddiqui (1998), "Developments and Trends in Madrasa Education", *Education & Muslims in India since Independence*, p. 78, Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi.

post-independence period developments in madrasa education in India is that, slowly, more attention is now being paid to impart Islamic education to girls and gradually more and more madrasas are founded exclusively for their education. Presently dozens of madrasas in U.P., Kerala, Maharashtra, A.P., Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu etc. offer facilities for girls' education in Islamic and secular subjects. Presently in India, there are two types of girl madrasas as describes M.A. Siddiqui:

"Two streams of courses are offered by these madrasas. One stream of courses spread over a period of fourteen years and provides for elementary to higher levels of education. The other stream includes short-term compact courses of two year and three year duration only in Islamic sciences for those girls who have completed their modern secondary or higher education and are now interested in acquiring religious education. In all courses meant for girls, their special needs and their further role in the Muslim society have been kept in view. In long term course, emphasis has been laid on including only more relevant portions of Islamic learning besides adding important modern subjects and matters related to housekeeping, nursing, maternity, general medicine, etc. in the syllabi. For example, the subjects and activities included in the first eight years' curriculum of Jamiatus Salihat a renowned residential madrasa for girls at Rampur, UP are: Quran (Nazira), Sirat, Teachings of Prophet, History of Islam, Fiqh, Arabic, Urdu, English, Hindi languages, General Knowledge, History, Geography, Sciences, Home Science, Mathematics, Arts, Tailoring, and Sports. Similar arrangements are there in Jamiatul Falah and other madrasas."<sup>131</sup>

131. Muhammad Akhtar Siddiqui (1998) "Developments and Trends in Madrasa Education", *Education & Muslims in India since Independence*, p. 76, IOS, New Delhi.

### Subjects Taught in Madrasas

The basic motto of madrasa education is to enable a student to understand Islam from its original sources like Qur'an and Hadith with insight and awareness. Since the Glorious Qur'an and Hadith are in Arabic so nearly all the books are in Arabic. Let us have a detailed look at the subjects that a Madrasa student has to pass.

1. Translation of the Glorious Qur'an
2. Tafseer (Commentary of the Qur'an or Exegesis)
3. Usul-e-Tafseer (principles related to Commentary of the Glorious Qur'an)
4. Tajweed (Art of Qur'anic pronunciation)
5. Qirat (Art of Recitation of the Qur'an)
6. Hadith, Science of Traditions, it includes 11 books, the 8<sup>th</sup> year is especially for Hadith. Mishkat Sharif, Bukhari Sharif and Tirmizi Sharif are taught completely with some selected chapters of the rest.
7. Usul-e-Hadith (principles related to Science of Traditions)
8. Fiqh (Jurisprudence or Islamic Law), it includes 5 books taught in different years up to 7th year
9. Usul-e-Fiqh, principles related to Islamic Jurisprudence, it also has 3 books taught in 3 different years
10. Nahv and Sarf (Arabic Grammar, Syntax), there are some 5 book on the subject taught in different years
11. Arabic Language with essay writing and composition develop the understanding of Arabic
12. Arabic literature, it has 2 book in 2 years
13. Mantiq (Logic) Nearly 3-5 small books on the subject during 3 years
14. Islamic History, History of Arabic Literature etc.
15. Ma'ani and Balagat (Articulation of Arabic)

16. Philosophy
17. Kalam (Scholasticism)
18. Aqaid (Beliefs)
19. Tasawwuf (Mysticism)
20. Geography
21. Metaphysics
22. Arithmetic
23. Biography
24. Asmaurrijal
25. Civics
26. Rhetoric
27. Philology
28. Calligraphy
- Etc.

The specialization courses in big madrasas that are called Takmeelat (specialization faculties) for students who complete their course at madrasas provide the students with education in a specific field. Generally there are specialization courses for Arabic Literature, Fiqh, Tafseer, Islamic studies and Tajweed.

### Subject Matters Taught in Madrasas

The knowledge that a madrasa student acquires is fully religion-oriented. The subject matters taught in these madrasas can be divided in the following four categories:

- Language and Literature
- Contemporary Learning
- Helping Sciences
- Higher Studies

1. In the language section, Urdu, Persian, Arabic Language and Literature and at places Hindi and English are taught. Urdu is used as medium of



teaching at madrasas in every part of the country even if where there are regional languages. Persian is taught only in first year of the entire *Fazilat* course. It helps the students to have good command over Urdu that has close links with Persian and Arabic. Nearly 95 per cent of the books of *Fazilat* course are in Arabic.

2. In the contemporary learning, Mathematics, General Science, Hygiene, Geography, History, Economics, Political Science and Philosophy are taught. Nowadays many madrasas have introduced English, computer, handicrafts and technical education.
3. In the third category, Grammar, Logic, Philosophy, Balagat are taught. These sciences are helpful for a student to understand the Glorious Qur'an, Hadith and Fiqh in depth.
4. The fourth category can be divided in to 7 categories; Belief, Prayers, Dealings, Social matters, Manners and Politics. Beliefs means the doctrines boundary which any person or group transgresses, deviates from Islam. Books on Aqeeda, Ilm-e-Kalam, and Hikmat-e-Sharia are related to Belief. The Prayers include Salah five times a day, Fasting in the month of Ramadan (9th month of Islamic Hijra calendar), paying poor due once in a year, pilgrimage to Makka for Hajj once in life and the thing related to them. Dealings include the rules of trade, buying, selling, debt and so on. Social matters are the rules of marriage, divorce, will, testimony, inheritance etc. Manners mean the right of a person toward mankind, towards neighbours, toward family members, toward the locality, toward any living being and the environment. Politics include court/justice system, laws of governing of a country, laws of defence, laws of waging war against enemy, rights of minorities and like this.

### **Madrasas Teach Secular Education More than Religious Education**

Generally, people think that madrasas impart pure Islamic learning for 8 years and they do not teach secular subjects. Madrasas are blamed to be hardliners and centres of fundamentalism where only theological education is imparted. If we look deeply into the entire curriculum and differentiate between secular and religious subjects we will come to a conclusion that madrasas teach general education more than religious one. Nearly one third of the total subjects is quite different from teaching religion. Like Arabic Grammar, Syntax, Arabic Language, Arabic Literature, Logic, History, Balagat (Elocution) Philosophy, Kalam (Scholasticism), Geography, Metaphysics, Arithmetic, Biography, Asmaurrijal (Anthropology), Civics, Rhetoric, Philology, Calligraphy, English etc. These subjects are in no way Islamic and they somehow or the other are taught in modern institutions also. The only difference is that in madrasas these subjects are taught in Arabic that has been widely misunderstood as Islamic theology.

The subjects that are considered to be Islamic like Translation of the Glorious Qur'an, Commentary of the Qur'an, Art of Recitation of the Qur'an, Hadith, Islamic Law, Principles related to Quran, Hadith and Fiqh, Aqaid (Beliefs), Mysticism etc. are partly Islamic and partly educational. Since the matters that these subjects include are widely believed and followed by people in the world at large without distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims. For example, the Glorious Quran, which is the most pure Islamic book in the entire curriculum, has 6236 verses and out of these all only about 500 hundred are related to commandments. The rest 5734 verses are related to parables, examples, universe, manners and so on. Likewise Hadith, the second most Islamic subject, includes secular subjects more than religious commandments. Fiqh, Islamic Law, is also the same. Except for some beliefs and prayers chapters

it corresponds with the UN Charters of Human Right and others that are believed by every human beings. Similarly, Muslim personal law, over which now there is more hue and cry by many extremists, consists of only some chapters related to marriage, inheritance, will, testimony and so on. So it is quite clear that the knowledge that is imparted in madrasas is as a whole at least 85 per cent non-theological.

## 5

### CHANGES RECOMMENDED IN MADRASA SYSTEM

The madrasas are often blamed to be stagnant and inactive in regard to their syllabus matters. But, the fact is that the Ulama and people of madrasas keep on changing and modifying now and then. If any person matches the Dars-e-Nizami of madrasas 60 years ago with the syllabus of today's madrasas, then only he will come to know the changes that have taken place. Out of many old Philosophy books only one book has remained which is partly taught. Similarly, Logic books were also reduced to an extent that are necessary to know the Logic terms that were used in the books of the earlier Ulama. New books of Arabic literature have also been added. Madrasas have not stopped the process of addition and deletion to adapt the syllabus to the modern requirements and still the process is on. In the following pages we shall try to find out some changes that are recommended in order to overcome the modern requirements.

#### **Need to Teach Arabic as a Language**

Undoubtedly, the main purpose of teaching Arabic in madrasas is to provide the student such an ability that can help him to understand the Glorious Qur'an and Hadith.



This much understanding doesn't require students to acquire Arabic writing and speaking skill. But now we see that the lack of writing and speaking skill affects their overall skill of understanding of Qur'an and Hadith. Secondly, having learned the highest books of Arabic grammar and articulation one should know Arabic writing and speaking, though it is not the target but at least it is recommendable. Thirdly, after having Islamic World coming into being, the graduates of madrasas should have good command of Arabic speaking and writing for communication purposes. And after all, the madrasa should introduce Arabic writing and speaking so that they may be able to introduce the valuable works, specially, to Arab World and the Islamic world at large. So, the student needs a special training in essay and composition.

Previously (in madrasa education) the sciences were given preference and Arabic Language was considered secondary thing. This is why Arabic speaking and writing was not counted in the objectives. In English education the language has been given importance and every possible method is being used to teach it along the factors that urge a person to learn the language. No doubt, now it is necessary to change the method and teach Arabic as a language putting it on front due to requirements of the time.<sup>132</sup>

There are many books available that serve the purpose. For instance, 'Al-Usloob Al-Sahih Lil-Insha' and 'Muallim ul-Insha. After all, to create an environment of Arabic in the madrasas, there should be arrangements to take classes in Arabic after the Fourth Class. But, all of a sudden, if it is difficult, the management of madrasa should decide to display all the notices and do all the official activities in Arabic. The managements and the

132. Maulana Muhammad Usuf Bennori (2001), "Madrais-e-Arabia ka Nisab-o-Nizam", *Tarjaman-e-Darul Uloom*, p. 40, February, New Delhi.

teachers should necessarily communicate with the students in Arabic only, besides the students should be asked to hold programme in Arabic during a month or two.<sup>133</sup>

For this purpose, madrasas should manage to purchase Arabic magazines and newspapers.<sup>134</sup>

In Dars-e-Nizami, the Arabic sciences were taught to familiarize students to understand Qur'an and Hadith. But, now the changing situations have made it necessary and basic requirement for an *Aalim* to have command on Arabic speaking and writing. In present days, none can deny the growing importance of relations between the Arab and Islamic World. We have to know new Arabic terms and modern style to establish contact and introduce the Arab World form the invaluable academic works that the Ulama of this subcontinent have contributed.<sup>135</sup>

Ibnul Hasan Abbasi Has quoted Allama Abul Kalam A'azad:

In olden days, we used to start our learning from *Mizan* and *Munshaib*, and *Sarf Mir* and *Nahw Mi*. These books were written for the days that were suitable for them; since Persian those days spread everywhere. But now Persian is a foreign language in India. You start teaching Arabic to a student and put three burdens on him at a time. First, he has to understand the foreign Persian, he has to understand the uneasy texts and then he has to come finally on the Arabic text.<sup>136</sup>

Likewise, instead of *Kafia* and *Sharh Jami* other books like *Sharh Ibn Aquil*, *Awzahul Masalik*, *Al-Qatarun Nada*, *Al-*

133. Mufti Taqi Usmani, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, pp. 96-97, Deoband.

134. Abbasi, *Dini Madaris*, p. 97.

135. *Ibid*, p. 86.

136. *Khutbat-e-Azad; Dini Madaris*, pp. 88-89.

*Nahw Al-Wazih* etc. may bring more fruits if added in the syllabus.<sup>137</sup>

### Ma'ani & Balagat

Likewise, the madrasas teach Arabic Grammar and Balagat but it does not go beyond a theoretical study. It lacks all kind of training and exercise. That is why a student of big Arabic Grammar book almost is unable to write even some lines in Arabic. For this very purpose, madrasas should add such books of Grammar that deal with the subject along with sufficient exercises.

The Arab countries have prepared so many books like 'Al-Nahv Al-Wazih' for secondary classes and 'Al-Nahv Al-Wafi' for higher classes. Similarly, the students are taught 'Mukhtasar Al-maani' in Balagat, but this book does not serve main purpose to achieve articulation in the language. So it should also be replaced by 'Duroos al-Balagah' or 'Al-Balagat Al-Waziha' to get the real meaning of Balagat."<sup>138</sup>

In *Ma'ani* and *Balagat*, Mukhtasar and Mutawwal are taught that are commentary of Talkhees by Allama Taftazani. But the fact is that the two books are not sufficient for this subject. For considerable use first book should consist of the terms and examples, and for that *Duroos Al-Balagah* and *Al-Balagat Al-Waziha* are more useful.<sup>139</sup>

### Inclusion of History Books

Needless to say that history is an important topic. No body can deny its significance for young children on whom rests the future of a nation and a community. Previously history

137. Abbasi, *Dini Madaris*, p. 95.

138. Taqi Usmani, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, p. 97, Deoband.

139. Abbasi, *Dini Madaris*, p. 98.

books were not included in madrasa curricula since the students were curious enough to study the history book on their own but in recent years the phenomenon of indifference towards study is prevalent. So it seems that history books also should find due place in syllabus.

Since the students in past days were used to studying history books, the history was not included in Dars-e-Nizami, but now it is clearly realized that the students are losing interests to study books on their own. That is why it seems necessary to add history; Islamic as well as general, books into the syllabi of the madrasas.<sup>140</sup>

### Inclusion of Tasawwuf Books

Previously, the madrasa students were used to have relations with pious personalities in order to achieve piety and purity, but now it is increasingly felt that, in the dazzles of the modern age, madrasas have lost their close links with spirituality. A high Islamic spirit, which was a characteristic of the madrasa people, is going down day by day. The new trend in madrasa students to abandon Islamic dress codes, indifference towards religious duties and growing materialistic approach is an alarming signal for the entire community. Here are some recommendations regarding the same:

The same case is with 'Tasawwuf'. It was also not a part of the syllabus because the entire atmosphere of the madrasas used to be immersed into high morality and Tasawwuf. Most of the students either studied books of Tasawwuf to rectify themselves or had relations with any Shaikh. In today's situation when moral chaos is prevailing all over, it must introduce Tasawwuf books like 'Hidayat Al-Hidaya', *Arbaeen*, *Ihya Al-Uloom*, *Awarif Al-Maarif*, *Al-Takashshuf* or *Al-Tasharruf*.<sup>141</sup>

140. Mufti Taqi Usmani, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, pp. 98-99, Deoband.

141. *Ibid.*



When discussing the education system of madrasas, the most important thing to us is the renaissance and revival of the madrasa spirit. For the very purpose, Tasawwuf books should be included. The students and teachers should be asked to gather, even once in a week, and study books such as Arwah-e-Salasa, Tazkirat Al-Rashid, Hayat Qasmi, Tazkirt Al-Khalil, Hayat Shaikh Al-Hind, Ashrafu Al-Sawaneh, Aap Biti etc. Teachers and management of a madrasa should necessarily have relations with any perfect shaikh. Likewise, it should be counted a blessing from Allah if a pious personality happens to be nearby to a madrasa or visits the locality.<sup>142</sup>

### Books on Comparative Religion

Nobody can deny the menace of Christian missionaries that spread throughout the world, especially Islamic world. From Indonesia to Morocco, the Christian missionaries have established their bases to attract poor and ignorant Muslims with different ways to their religion. Likewise, for example in India Muslims live with Hindus everywhere for centuries. But nobody, even Ulama, feel the need to introduce Islam to their Hindu neighbours.

It is necessary for an Islamic scholar to know the fundamental beliefs and thoughts of the world religions that directly clash with Islam and have their preaching missions in the Islamic world. Ulama should also have basic information about the sects that diverted from Islam and have their own entity. Ulama should be acquainted with the lines and the boundaries from where a religion or a sect diverts from the main and straight Islamic path so that they may well be capable of delivering the message of Islam at any point of time. For this very purpose, the syllabus should have a permanent subject on 'Al-Adyan wal Firaq' in which the student can have

142. *Ibid*, pp. 94-95.

a cursory look on the history, beliefs and distinct features of a religion and a sect.<sup>143</sup>

Similarly, there are many sects in Muslim community. Ulama at least should have some knowledge about them so that they stay aware of the boundaries of their faith and inform the people of the same if it happens to come.

### Modern Sciences and Madrasas

There are many modern sciences like English language, Western economical, political and law philosophy, in this age that have either been necessary or helpful for Ulama in order to preach and defend Islam effectively due to some reasons.

1. English is the fountainhead of all the consequences that spread through the modern Western education. And till the Ulama do not learn it their comments and criticism cannot impress the people who have directly fallen prey to it. This was the same situation that Islamic world faced at the time of Abbasid caliphate when the Greek logic and philosophy was prevailing all over. Since these philosophies were breeding wrong notions, Ulama of that period included the Logic and Philosophy books in the syllabus and confronted the menace that finally dies its natural death. Today, new thoughts and ideas that are raised in the West have encompassed the world. The modern educated people of the Islamic world are also impressed by the thoughts. The works that have been carried out so far, are useful only for those who are already good Muslim and less affected by the Western way of thinking. But those who have submerged in the depth of the West require the kind of action that Ulama had done

143. *Ibid*, p. 99, Deoband.

against the Greek Philosophy. According to Mufti Taqi Usmani, this is a debt on the Islamic scholars. The later they will pay it back the longer Western misguidance will last.<sup>144</sup>

2. Since those who did critical works on the Western thoughts and represented Islam, though they had access to the Western sources, but they had just studied Islam. That is why the explanations that were put by them were based on misunderstandings that led to the ones opening the door for dissent and controversy. To put an end to these misunderstandings Ulama have to carry out positive works.<sup>145</sup>
3. The Orientalists have piled up a heap of venomous works on Islam and Arabic in the name of research that aimed at creating doubts regarding widely believed notions of Muslims. The literature was prepared in such a manner that can appeal the minds and hearts. It is the duty of Ulama to provide a remedy of the venom that has spread throughout Muslim world.<sup>146</sup>
4. In present time, a large number of Muslims live in Europe, America, Africa, Australia and Far East countries. There is no way to convey the message of Islam to them except English language. The Muslims in these regions face difficulties to safeguard the religion of their children. They need English knowing Ulama for the mosques and Islamic centres that they have built to meet the need of the Muslims there. Mufti Taqi Usmani concedes that he had been receiving demands for English knowing Ulama almost every month from these places. The tragedy

here is that due to lack of authentic faith these vacancies are assumed by those who have very superficial knowledge of Islam and represent Islam as per their so-called research goes.<sup>147</sup>

5. Muslims living in these countries need Islamic literature at a larger scale, but the condition is that there is not even a single Commentary of the Glorious Qur'an for which we can advise to study. Likewise, there are not sufficient books that can guide them about their daily matters and basic individual needs. On the contrary, they find the literatures flowing everywhere that were prepared by the enemies of Islam.<sup>148</sup>
6. As Imam Muhammad (RA) used to walk round the market to explore new dealings and their explanation in Islam, today's Ulama should also know the developments that have taken place in the field of business and economics. The modern age has brought about so many complex and unique ways of dealings that are beyond the reach of Fiqh books taught in madrasas. Therefore, it has become for every Aalim to have needful knowledge of the modern economics.<sup>149</sup> M. Taqi Usmani asserts that he is sure the Fiqh students in madrasas will grasp and cover the matters in a period ten times shorter than the colleges take.<sup>150</sup> The current curriculum of madrasas does not have even a book on modern economics. The modern economics has created so many new forms and ways that should be known to an A'alim to solve it in the light of *Sharia*. There are many works done on modern economics in Arabic. In Urdu *Islam aur Jadid Ma'eeshat-o-Tijarat* written by

147. Usman, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, p. 101.

148. *Ibid*, pp. 101-02.

149. *Ibid*, pp. 102-03.

150. *Ibid*, p. 122.

144. Usman, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, p. 100.

145. *Ibid*, pp. 100-01.

146. *Ibid*.



Mufti Taqi Usmani is good enough to include in the syllabi of madrasas.<sup>151</sup>

7. The new political and economical theories have divided the world into two opponent groups. The Islamic world is also practically divided on the matter. Every undeveloped and developing country is battling the two theories. Capitalism, Socialism and Secularism are continuing their untiring efforts to get the side of Muslims. In the entire world, even Islamic world, no one knows the political and economical systems that were laid down by Islam. Only the Ulama can challenge the situation, but for that they have to know these theories. Similarly, it is necessary to be aware of the current political systems. There should be a book in syllabus that deals with these political systems and their principles.<sup>152</sup>
8. In recent times, the Islamic world has realized the heinous mistake that it committed by adopting the Western education system as it was. Therefore, every Muslim country now echoes the resounding to change the syllabus and incorporate Islamic spirit and thoughts in the entire education system to end the supremacy of Western thoughts on Islamic ones. People in Muslim countries establish research centers for the same that need Ulama who know English and the modern theories.<sup>153</sup>

Similarly, Maulana Muhammad Usuf Bennori, one of famous scholar of Deoband, also asserts on including some modern sciences in madrasas. He Says:

The old syllabus of madrasas lacks Modern Ilm-e-Kalam, Modern Philosophy, Economics, and some other Modern

151. Abbasi, *Dini Madaris*, p. 109.

152. *Ibid.*

153. Usmam, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, p. 103.

sciences. Now it seems necessary. As there were books on Jahmia, Hashvia, Khawarij, Motazilah and Qadriah sects which diverted from the right path, now it is an important part of our religious duty is to criticize Communism, Socialism, Fascism and so on. Had there been our forefathers alive in these days they must have given us weapons to fight these forces as they have given us before."<sup>154</sup>

Maulana Wahiduddeen Khan regards ignorance from English the key reason that left Muslim scholars out of the leading folk.

After the British occupied India they changed the language from Persian to English. Now, not only to establish communication with the rulers but also to run any movement among the masses English became necessary. After this linguistic change, the history presents another scenario; Ulama who have performed leading role for one thousand year were marginalized. For example the Indian sub-continent witnessed two great movements in the first half-twentieth century; freedom movement and partition movement. Ulama participated in both the movements, but the history tells us that mostly they played secondary role. And the same situation remained after partition. It will not be out of place to say that the Indian Ulama have all the skills that are necessary for a leader in present time, but only one lapse has put them out of field that is their ignorance from English.<sup>155</sup>

No doubt, it is not a job to be carried out in one or two year. And neither necessarily, it means that the students in

154. Maulana Muhammad Usuf Bennori, "Madrasis-e-Arabia ka Nisab-o-Nizam", *Tarjaman-e-Darul Uloom*, p. 44, February, New Delhi.

155. Maulana Wahiduddeen Khan (2000), *Nai Dunia*, 5 to 11 December, New Delhi.

madrasas should be given special training nor spending much time on the matters. But it is believed that a student who has successfully passes Dars-e-Nizami is able enough to understand every academic and ideological issue and grasp it with ease. If a madrasa student is taught English and fundamentals of the above-mentioned subjects, he will, Allah willing, be able to highlight the works, efforts and goals of Ulama for Islam and the country.

In this regard, the first and foremost thing that madrasa people have to do is to select cream and talented students and interested teachers who have speaking as well as writing skills to make them acquainted with any of English, Western Philosophy, Economics, Law or Politics and provide facilities to master in the concerning subject. In the meantime, they should be given some responsibility of teaching of Islamic sciences so that they may maintain their relation with them. After completing the course they should carry out modernized and comparative works on Islam and its teachings.

### Logic and Philosophy Books

Logic, from its inception has been controversial. Some regarded it as necessary and some other discarded it. Imam Ghazali is reported to have said that those who don't know Logic they cannot be perfect scholar. On the other hand, Allam ibn Tamia says: "I don't think that Allah will forgive Mamoon Abbasid, according to me, he will certainly be punished for he engaged the *Ummah* in Logic and Philosophy." Even in this time some people argue that madrasas need not teach Logic and Philosophy after the downfall of the Greek Philosophy. The madrasa people, on the other hand, argue that Logic is taught because the student of Islamic sciences can never make use of the valuable book of scholars like Ghazali, Razi and many others. They will remain cut off from a precious asset of their past that are very helpful. According Mufti Taqi Usmani, this idea holds no water as he says:

To signify these two subjects it is sufficient to say that the grand collection of our forefathers' works, particularly *Usul-e-Fiqh*, is full of Logical and Philosophical terms. None can utilize the matchless *Tafseer Kabeer* unless he has the knowledge of the two sciences. Therefore, their total exclusion from syllabus will mean irreparable harm. Yes, these sciences should be taught only to a compulsory extent. Thus, the madrasas who have extra books on the subjects should replace them by other recommendable ones. It is to be noted that the matters in Philosophy that have been proved wrong by Astronomers and experience should be changed by new researches for which *Tawfiq Ar-Rahman* of Allama Najib, *Ma Dalla Alaihi Al-Quran* of Aalusi and *Jadid Falakiyat* of Muhammad Musa may be very helpful.<sup>156</sup>

### Kalam and Aquaid

Kalam is very important topic as it is related to beliefs and faith. In Kalam today the madrasas teach some books which deal with sects that are no more on the surface of the earth. Now we witness new philosophies of life that have divide the world.

Today's madrasa syllabus does not have any book on modern Kalam. Generally madrasas teach *Sharh aquaid*, *Khayali* and *Sharh Mawaqif*. These books include chapters that have sprung up owing to Greek philosophy's strike on Islamic world. Undoubtedly, it was a great achievement of the scholars of that age that they attacked the Greek philosophy by its own weapon that reduced the buildings of the philosophy into rubbles. Now the Greek philosophy is not a threat for Islam, today new sects and anti-religious movements have come into being with philosophies of life. Today who will play the role

156. Usman, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, p. 105.



as it was played by scholars against Greek philosophy? In present days, madrasas bear responsibility to prove superiority of Islamic life system on the contemporary philosophies and present comparative study, experiences and evidences. The more they will be late the more false philosophies will expand its area. For that *Ar-Rislat Al-Hamidia* of Trabulsi and *Al-Intibahat Al-Mufidah* of Thanwi can fulfill the need to some extent.<sup>157</sup>

### Dawrah Hadith

It is felt that the final year for Hadith seems insufficient to meet the requirement of Hadith. For example, *Sahih Bukhari*, which is the most important book of Hadith, is taught cursorily whereas every part of the book deserves special attention. Similarly some other books like *Tahawi Sharif*, *Muattain* (*Muatta Imam Malik and Muatta Imam Muhammad*) are scantily taught due to shortage of time. If the final year is divided into two parts and include any standard book on *Usul-e-Hadith* like *Tadrib Ar-Rawi* or *Fath Al-Mugis* the student will get familiar with the subject.<sup>158</sup>

### Tafseer and Madrasas

Many people think that Dars-e-Nizami madrasas give less importance to the Glorious Qur'an and Tafseer. Maulana Ibnul Hassan Abbasi does not agree to this point as he says:

Some people think that the madrasas have given very less share to Qur'an and Tafseer in their syllabus. But this idea is based on misconception since the students are taught Translation and Tafseer of the Glorious Qur'an to the 5th year. In the 6th year they are taught complete *Jalalain*, a famous book of Tafseer. And in some madrasas in the 7th year they are again taught *Baizawi*. Therefore,

157. Usmam, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*.

158. *Ibid*, pp. 105-6.

the doubt that madrasas have not given importance to Quran in their syllabus is far from fact.<sup>159</sup>

### Madrasas Forgot their Mission

As every section of life has suffered decline madrasas also have witnessed a grave decline. If we compare today's madrasas with the madrasas of 60-70 years ago we will find a sea change between the two. Some madrasas have surely developed in term of buildings, luxury but the soul on which they depend is growing weaker and weaker. Why is it so? According to Mufti Taqi Usmani:

As per I contemplated the matter I reached to a conclusion that the teaching and learning process in madrasas is becoming a tradition and its main objective has been forgotten. Though we claim that we aim at serving Islam but, contrarily, our day and night efforts are always directed to the external matters. We always try to win fame, increase in the number of students and gain popularity among masses, as they are the sole purpose of madrasas. The madrasas do not care the educational, moral and religious status of the students. Likewise, the teachers always look for opportunities to teach such books by which they impress the students and gain popularity. In past the teachers and students had a spiritual relation that was not confined only to the classrooms but now it is becoming like fairy tales.<sup>160</sup>

Maulana Ibnul Hassan Abbasi says:

It is a cause of concern that the system of training and self-purifying is witnessing a continual decline. The students spend their precious time in madrasas, so it is the responsibility of the management of madrasas to lay down such a system that can nourish good qualities,

159. Abbasi, *Dini Madaris*, p. 24.

160. Usmam, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, pp. 124-5.

manners and healthy values in the students. For this, as on the one hand they necessarily should study *Tasawwuf* books and be in the company of pious people while on the other madrasas should take into account requirements of a human life during different stages of life and keep a tight vigil. There are two things that should compulsorily be corrected. First, the madrasa people go to affluent Muslims and adopt shameful ways to derive money. The question is what is the need to adopt a way that causes humiliation of religion of Allah, education and students. Some madrasas, which are more money-fetching factory than a madrasa, are foremost in this line. Second, madrasa people are losing caution and honesty in madrasa accounts. These two reasons also are working to vitiate the spiritual environ of madrasas.<sup>161</sup>

#### Short-term Courses of Islamic Studies

As this age is unprecedented in history in term of luxuries of life, materialism and pursuit towards carnal desires, but still it is surprising that this age is witnessing multitude of Dawah and preaching organizations which operate in Muslims as well as in non-Muslims sectors. People attend mosques in large number and are seen interested in learning Islam. Especially Tabligi Jamat has created such a spirit to learn Islam in Muslims all over the world that is nothing short of a worldwide revolution. Many rich Muslims who even could not think of sending their children to madrasas before, that they now prefer their children to be educated at madrasas. Many youths who leant modern education wish to learn Islamic sciences also, but the problem they face is that they do not have much time to join madrasas for eight or seven years. According to Maulana Muhammad Usuf Bennori it is one of the most important need of time to introduce short-term madrasas course. In his view it will help

161. Ibnul Hasan Abbasi, *Dini Madaris*, pp. 115, 117, Deoband.

to bridge the gulf between the modern and religious education as he says:

In this regard I wish that as our central madrasas teach their syllabus and research they should introduce a short-term Islamic syllabus for those who do not want to be an Aalim but they want to know the Glorious Quran, Hadith and Islamic Sciences as per their needs. For this, as much as a three-year course will serve the purpose that includes Arabic Grammar, the Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, Beliefs, History and Literature so that they can meet their need to speak and write Arabic. As far as I know this is one of the utmost requirements of the time and many people yearn for it. In this programme, on the one hand a graduate will find opportunity to become Aalim while on the other, it will bridge the vacuum between modern and religious education and create a nice stage for different groups to meet. And it will help to sort out the misconceptions among them.<sup>162</sup>

The other view is that:

The students of common schools, whether government or public, are denied opportunities for religious and cultural education. Madrasas can and should introduce short-term courses to enable students of common schools to learn their own culture and religion. But designing courses for such students is a challenging task and the academic staff of madrasas will have to undergo an orientation for themselves. But such endeavors are necessary if we want to end the alienation between the moral and material realms of the Muslim social and cultural life.<sup>163</sup>

162. Maulana Muhammad Usuf Bennori, "Madrasis-e-Arabia ka Nisab-o-Nizam", *Tarjaman-e-Darul Uloom*, p. 34, March, New Delhi.

163. Ashraf Ali, "A Perspective on Muslim Education in India", *Islamic Education: Redefinition of Aims and Methodology*, Manzoor Ahmad, p. xi, Genuine Publications & Media, Delhi.



## 6

## DIVISION BETWEEN WORLDLY AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION

As Islam is a comprehensive religion its education system is also comprehensive. It includes all kind of sciences and arts that are beneficial for human beings in this world and hereafter. Islam does not encourage such things that seem to be sciences but they are based on ignorance and useless or even harmful for human being. Thus, Islam classifies the useful sciences from useless and harmful ones. Islam gave every science its due position and importance so that people can benefit themselves from them as per their importance and need. The Qur'an, Tafseer, Hadith and Fiqh were called as original and high sciences while other sciences like Logic, Philosophy etc. were named as helping sciences. But, for the spirit and voracity that Islam created in the Muslims for knowledge they did not make any distinction between the sciences. Muslims in early centuries used to be perfect in every education whether it is related to this world or hereafter.

### How this Gulf Widened?

After the Abbasid Caliphate was collapsed and Baghdad was ravaged by Tartars (in 656-?) Muslims were left centuries

behind. Their key educational institutions were destroyed, scholars were murdered and the huge libraries were burnt to ashes. There was such a devastation that the history never witnessed before. Due to political downfall, the structure of Muslim society scattered. This caused mental and academic backwardness that led them to see the Science, Philosophy and other advanced sciences as foreign ones. So far, Western countries having broken the cobweb of Church's rules had stepped in the field. They got education and science from Baghdad, Sicily and Cordoba.

Muslims in other parts like India and Turkey had chance to sustain for some time. They had education systems that made no discrimination between worldly and religious knowledge. The entire Muslim world had such an educational system that had served their all needs and produced people of every kind that the nation needed whether *Ulama* or masters in Medicine, Science, Math, Geography, Astronomy and so on. But, Muslims could not make more progress that can enable them to lead the world. Their education system decayed with passage of time while European countries surpassed them. Then, one day the colonial rules put an end to them.

Before the invasion and occupation of Muslim lands by the Western colonial powers, there was however only one type of schooling prevalent throughout the Muslim world. In which the madrasa used to be impart for both religious and temporal education. The system produced young men for the services, trades and industries who were also rooted in their religion, culture and value system. As the West came they sowed the seed of segregation of religious and temporal learning. Since it is the product of the historic conflict between the Church and the leaders of Renaissance and Reformation. When the Christians in the West started learning science and philosophy they faced dire consequences from the Churches. Philosophers and scientists were even torched to death. Ultimately, people revolted against Church and got rid of the conservative rule. From

there a line of demarcation was drawn between the religious education and other sciences. It proved the irrelevance of Christianity to the life outside the Church. But, this was never witnessed in Islamic history where scientific advancements and Islamic sciences went side by side.

The colonial powers, on the one hand, introduced their own education system with different language and shut the doors of employment for the madrasa students while on the other they destroyed and closed old madrasas. Consequently, the majority of people tended towards the modern institutions for certain material reasons and remaining madrasas started vanishing away from the surface of the land. The only option that was left to Ulama was to establish charitable Islamic institutions to impart pure religious education that was rejected and suppressed by the occupiers. In this way, two systems of education prevailed, i.e. religious education system and modern education system.

The Muslim countries, which suffered under colonial rule, struggled for freedom and finally they achieved it in the last century. Even after independence, most of the Muslim countries continue to run both religious and temporal educational institutions side by side. They could not manage to arrange such an education system that bridges the gulf between the two. This is a loophole that many Muslim scholars feel:

I would like to ask is it a good thing that Muslims in the country and in the Islamic world are facing two types of education. Is it worthy to be kept as it is? Will it give any good result if the masses will be divided into two, one with the intellectuals and the other with Ulama? This form of division and confrontation must be put to an end. Why the people did not sense the importance of the historical personalities who safeguarded the education from division for thirteen centuries. People don't realize it, but I consider the unity of Muslims' education system one of great achievements. The entire thirteen-centuries

bear the witness that those who were called Ulama they were intellectuals and those who were intellectuals they were also called as Ulama. What a surprise! A single education system was producing philosopher, Mathematicians, Doctors, Engineers, Muhaddis, Mufassir, poets and Sufis.<sup>164</sup>

It is painful that education has been divided into two different categories. People in Muslim countries see both systems differently. Those who learn the modern education they think that they need not learn Islamic sciences. And those who acquire Islamic sciences they remain aloof from the modern ones. This is a challenge to the Muslim nations. The education system and its division that Muslims have inherited from their colonial masters no longer suit Islamic traditions. They have to manage both Islamic as well as education in a balanced and appropriate way that may serve their religious and worldly purposes.

As far as the matter of Muslims who are in non-Muslim countries is concerned their national education system will certainly be modern. The Muslim minorities in non-Islamic countries have been suggested by a conference (called by Jamiatul Malik Abdul Aziz in Makka on 31 March 1977) to arrange religious education to a necessary extent without government interference and teach subjects that help students to get government employments.

### Ulama and Modern Education

There is a very famous idiom "bad news travels fast". It clearly befits on the propaganda that Ulama have prohibited learning English and modern sciences. Like Gobbles' saying 'repeat lie so much that it becomes true', some people have floated this idea into the air and it became undeniable. Many people still believe and quote now and then in public that

164. Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani, *Hindustan Main Musalmanon ka Nizam-e-Talim w Tarbiat*, Vol. 1, pp. 303-04, Nadwatul Musannifin, Delhi.



Ulama asked Muslims to shun English and modern sciences. Sayyid Gauhar Ali, a member of 'Khaksar Movement' has stated in his pamphlet that Ulama were real impediment to Muslim educational advancement:

It is known to all how this so called sacred group (Ulama) behaved with Sir Sayyid Khan when he rose to introduce English education among Muslims. Since it was a crying need and an immediate requirement of the time to acquire English education, he enjoyed success and those who opposed him cut a sorry figure. Owing to this conflict, Muslims were left behind for almost fifty years in the field of modern developments and suffered a lot due to their backwardness. It is they who are responsible for alienating Muslims from their religion because they were bent on discarding modern education. Had the Ulama cooperated with Sir Sayyid to promote English and reform the lacunas of the English education system (as Sir Sayyid dedicated himself to teach the language of the rulers), things wouldn't have come to such a pass. Muslims are ultimately Muslims, so they returned back to the Islamic fold. And the same Aligarh College produced personalities like Ali brothers and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, the well known statesman on whom Indian Muslims take pride today.<sup>165</sup>

Here it was categorically attributed to Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi that he termed English as unlawful. "Muhammad Qasim, who predicated Shamli's campaign, founded a religious institution named as Darul Uloom Deoband. He formulated some principles and asked his followers to shun government aids, and regarded learning English as unlawful."<sup>166</sup>

165. Pamphlet, pp. 2-3; *Jadid Talim awr Ulama ka Jurm Azim*, p. 2, Abdul Hafiz Balyvi, Al-Furqan Breily, 1940.

166. K.M. Ashraf (1998), *Ihya-e-Islam ke Hami awr 1857 ka Inquilab*; P.C. Joshi, *Inquilab 1857*, p. 104, Qaumi Council Bara-e-Froge Urdu Zaban, Delhi.

None else but Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer has also written that Maulana Mahmudul Hasan opposed modern education since it was a British imperial system.

This madrasa had come into existence during period of great crisis for north Indian Muslims when Muslims were facing British wrath and the Ulama were in the forefront of anti-British struggle much before Indian National Congress came into existence and national freedom movement started. These Ulama remained steadfast in their struggle for freedom and also became allies of the Congress and firmly opposed two nation theory and partition of the country. These Ulama led by Maulana Mahmudul Hasan opposed modern education not so much because it was modern and secular but more so as it was British imperialist system.<sup>167</sup>

These are just few examples which I have come across, otherwise there are plenty of things that are said about Ulama in term of English and modern sciences. But as far as my knowledge goes I have never seen any sentence that may back the claim. In this regard I firmly stand with Abdul Hafiz Balyavi:

Those who have studied thoroughly the ups and downs of Europe, they only can realize the expertise that the European politicians have acquired in the art of killing *two birds with one arrow*. They used the same weapon to suppress their avowed enemies in India (Ulama). Having realized that they can't be tamed to follow their line, they adopted the policy of maligning Ulama so that they would be isolated from Muslim masses and disliked by them. They tried every stratagem to achieve this goal. One among the tools they employed to achieve this objective was the propaganda that the Maulvis were inactive, unaware of

167. Asghar Ali Engineer (2001), "Muslims and Education", *Secular Perspective*, 1 to 15 August.

the needs of their community and are the real cause for their decline and backwardness. They are the hurdles in the way of Muslim acquiring modern education that has left them behind in comparison of the compatriots. The propaganda was made so subtly and artfully that our own tongues were used to strengthen this notion. It penetrated as an undeniable fact into the minds of the people that they even didn't feel the need to verify in the light of the happenings. Many tongues and pen are propagating this notion as if it is an established truth or revelation from God.<sup>168</sup>

So, this propaganda was publicized. Whereas we see that Ulama who issued fatwa of Jihad against the English they never prohibited people from learning English. It was their farsightedness and broadmindedness that they never shut down their eyes from the developments that were taking place in Europe. Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1823), son of Shah Waliullah and leader of all Ulama of his age, said, "go and learn English, it is allowed." Sir Sayyid himself quoted this sentence in his book *Asbab-e-Bagawat-e-Hind*. Another great scholar of that time Maulana Abdul Hayee Lucknowi (d. 1887) writes when he was asked whether Muslims are allowed to learn English:

It is not prohibited to learn English. The Prophet (pbuh) asked Hazrat Zaid Ibn Sabit (RA) to learn the language of Jews as it is narrated in Tirmizi. Hazrat Zaid says: The Prophet ordered me to learn Syriac language and said that he did not trust any Jew. So I learnt the language within less than six months. After that whenever the Prophet had to write to the Jews I used to write and when they wrote to me I read for him.<sup>169</sup>

168. Abdul Hafiz Balyvi, *Jadid Talim awr Ulama ka Jurm Azim*, p. 1, Al-Furqan Breily, 1940.

169. Abdul Hayee Lucknowi, *Fatawa Maulana Abdul Hayee Lucknowi*, pp. 549-50.

Likewise Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1323 AH), one of the pillars of Darul Uloom Deoband, says in *Fatawa Tashdia* that learning English is right provided it does not cause sin and harm to religion.<sup>170</sup> Similarly, Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi (1297 AH) not only wished to learn English but also he regarded it very helpful for madrasa students: "Having completed the course of Darul Uloom Deoband if the students go to acquire the knowledge of modern sciences it will help them to be perfect."<sup>171</sup>

Sheikhul Hind Maulana Mahmood Hasan Deobandi (d. 1920), though he had hated the English to the least but he laid the foundation of Muslim National University that was later known as Jamia Millia Islamia for modern education. In his presidential speech at this occasion he asserted that the scholars know that our forefathers have not given fatwa of infidelity on learning foreign languages, sciences and arts.<sup>172</sup> Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (d. 1942) has clearly said:

English as well Hindi along with all languages is a language and any language in itself is not bad, but it is a boon from Allah the Almighty as the Glorious Quran says in Chapter 30 verse 22. The Prophet himself talked to Abu Huraira (RA) in Persian that was the language of Zoroastrians as narrated it Ibn Maja in his book. But sometime a good thing becomes bad because of some factors that accompany. Yes, if there is any religious interest like to compete the Christians or Hindus, or there is any material use like earning money, then it is allowed to learn.<sup>173</sup>

170. *Fatawa Rashidia*, Vol. 1, p. 64; *Tarikh Darul Uloom Deoband*, Vol. 2, pp. 304-05.

171. *Sawaneh-e-Qasmi*, Vol. 2, p. 281.

172. Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani (1954), *Naqsh Hayat*, Vol. 2, p. 257, Deoband.

173. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, *Fatawa Imdadia*, Vol. 4, pp. 190-91.



Here a major question arises how this baseless blame gained notoriety against the Ulama that they prevented Muslims from the acquirement of English education wherefore Muslims lagged behind other communities in the field of worldly progress. It seems it originated when Sir Sayyid started his mission he was opposed by some scholars. But the interesting point is that those who opposed Sir Sayyid all were modern educated and employees of the British government. They prepared a question and sent it to some Ulama asking whether a man having these beliefs may be Muslim. The Ulama answered, without naming any one, that one who believed in such things one couldn't be a Muslim. This fatwa was used by the opponents of Sir Sayyid as weapon against him. After all Ulama never were in field to oppose Sir Sayyid. Due to this conflict many people did not send their children to Sir Sayyid's school. But later when it was clear that Sir Sayyid would not implement his thoughts in his school people began to educate their children at Aligarh.

To begin with the Muslims' social system was scattered after 1857, their educational institutions were destroyed. After some years when the normalcy returned they were abhorred the new rulers so much due to extreme atrocities that they were not ready to send their children in government's new education system. And, they feared also that their children might tend to Christianity since the Christian missionaries were freely busy in their work. So, for a period of time there was no alternative to modern education system for Muslims until came Sir Sayyid. But his educational mission also met with great hurdles and impediments for quite some time and till that time Muslims were far behind in education filed. These were the reasons that 1857 proved such a period for Muslims that left them away from milieu of education and progress.

## 7

# THE MODERN SYLLABUS SYSTEM AND PROBLEMS

### **Distinct Features of Islamic Education**

The value system of Islam has created some fundamental differences between Islamic and the modern education system; both of the west and the east. The first and foremost difference between them lies in their attitude towards life itself. While the former does not regard this life as an end in itself but also as a means for attainment of spiritual goals in the hereafter, while the latter considers this life and its happiness as its final aim. It concerns itself solely and entirely with material well-being. Islam regards education as source to achieve humanity, moral values and universal success. It does not confine purposes of education to the material gain of this world only but it universalize it to hereafter. The subjects and matters that are taught in madrasas are not only useful for this life but also cause salvation in the life hereafter that is eternal. The modern education is only job-oriented and materialistic. It does not look beyond this material world. So, the Islamic one has a high and eternal goal while the modern education has world-limited purpose. And with the height of goals changes the nature of things.

Unlike the West, there is no segregation between the religious and temporal education in the Islamic system. This segregation in the West is a curious product of the historical conflict between the Church and the leaders of the Renaissance and the Reformation. The education system that was imposed on us in the English period had many loopholes; the key lapse was that it cut off Islam from the entire sections of the human life and confined it to prayers and personal affairs. It is needless to say that Islam has special teachings and system that ranges from government and politics to business and trade. Hence, until this system was in practice, the education system was not confined to only Islamic sciences but every science and art reflected Islam. The student of every science and art whether it is Philosophy, Logic, Science, Mathematics, Medical Science and so on, found them mixed with Islamic thoughts and Islamic way of thinking everywhere. This was the reason that the Muslims of the age were always devout Muslims whether they adopt any kind of education. While people in west, on six days of the week, are guided by one set of values and on Sabbath, by another set of values, which is represented by the Church. This has produced a permanent dichotomy and double thinking in western society. In the Islamic values system there is no such segregation. The Islamic concept of education does not lead to such a rootlessness or lack of an integrated personality. The Islamic World View, in fact, controls and determines the educational value of the Muslim community at large.

Islamic education is much broader in its scope than the educational system of the democratic West and the socialist East. It aims at training the pupils in such a manner that in their attitude to their environs and approach to all kinds of knowledge, they are governed by the spiritual and ethical values of Islam. As Shah Waliullah has said: "Muslim education aims at nurturing a righteous man in a righteous society." But, in other systems this aspect of human being

has been neglected. That is why the nations that adopted such systems they consequently suffer from moral chaos.

Another fundamental difference between the Islamic system of education and the modern lies in conception of man himself. In the Islamic concept of life, man is born free and innocent not burdened with the Original Sin. Here, the man is not creature of this earth but also a spiritual being gifted with limitless power to control and govern the Universe. The Qur'an also calls him the Vice regent of Allah on earth and his superiority lies in his knowledge and ability to learn. As against this, the modern system of education, its science and technology have, instead of serving man and making him free, started controlling his body and soul. Man, who should be the master of knowledge and sciences, has become, to borrow a phrase from Thomas Hobbes, "worm in the entrails" of modern sciences. We shall come to this aspect later in some details.

The aim of acquisition of knowledge in the Islamic system is not merely to satisfy an intellectual curiosity but to train rational and righteous individuals for the moral and physical good of their families, their people and for the entire mankind. The Islamic system of education strikes a balance between the need for individual excellence and the requirements of the society.

Nazir Ahmad, Principal of Shibli College Lahore, had a survey of the Pakistani madrasas and wrote a book that consists of 800 pages. As far as the moral values are concerned the Indian madrasas are no less than those in Pakistan. Here are some extracts:

The economic situation of the Arabic madrasas is generally unsatisfactory. Commonly they subsist on dinner. There are many a teachers who teach free of cost while many of them support the students financially. They live and wear simply. They neither require splendid attire to wear nor bungalows to live. The teachers respect each other and have ambitions of honour for their contemporaries. The



feelings that madrasas students have regarding their teachers are missing in the students of other institutions. . . . Madrasas students have some characteristics that distinguish them from other students. . . . These students are in no way mentally lesser than the students of other institutions. Some people may doubt the claim, but the fact is that the students are sharp-minded and farsighted in their field."<sup>174</sup>

Madrasa education is based on moral and value system. The students of madrasas are much more mannered and respectful for elders and kind to younger ones. They are taught Islamic teachings that are full of morality, humanity and brotherhood. While the thing that are taught in modern institutes have no place for morals and courtesy. Here is a report related to Pakistani schools and colleges that are not much different from those in India:

The statistics say that during the past 50 years the government institution students have carried out humiliation of 10,000 teachers, 60,000 incidents of protest, fight and strikes, 1500 incidents of murder, destruction of government property in billions, 2000 incidents of burning government cars and buses and loss of 6000 days due to their protest and strikes. But the entire period is mum regarding incidents that have been carried out by the madrasa students.<sup>175</sup>

The advantage of madrasa education is that those who are graduate from there are though less-paid, but they never go wandering in the streets in search of job and employment like those of modern institutions' graduates. They are satisfied with what they learn in term of matter and spirituality.

174. Ibnul Hasan Abbasi, *Pakistan ke Dini Madaris ka Ja'aiza*, p. 228.

175. 'Wujood', Vol. 2, No. 16, Karachi; Ibnul Hasan Abbasi, *Dini Madaris*, pp. 52-54, Mazi, Hal, Mustaqbil.

### The Status of Modern Teachers

The teachers and students in madrasas always avail low salaries and least facilities. Despite all these, they remain devoted to teaching and learning. The teachers love the students like fathers and cooperate with them while the students respect them. On the contrary the teachers and students in modern institutions have nominal interest in their work and mostly the students have no relationship with teachers. Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani, who himself was in Usmania University at Hyderabad, describes his experience:

Today, the teachers are paid salary, allowance, exam revenue and so many things but the general group of teachers always evades from educational activities, escape from teaching as much as it can. The teachers of the madrasas, to a certain extent, can have an excuse that they receive a very low salary, but the teachers of the western type of institutions are given very reasonable salaries.<sup>176</sup>

### Problem of Changing Syllabus Every Year

In the modern education system, the education ministries change syllabi frequently that results in to a big problem for majority of people. In a country like India where education is less than 65 and 60 per cent population is poor it is in no way in the interest of the nation to overburden the citizens with unnecessary things. Maulana Gilani regards it a financial crisis for poor countries like India:

In the modern schools and colleges, the changing of syllabus is a problem. The books that the elder brother has studied are useless for the younger brother after a few years. It is ironic that the new books that are

176. Gilani (1987), *Hindustan Mein Musalmanon ka Nizam-e-Taleem-o-Tarbiat*, Vol. 1, p. 440, Delhi.

replaced are commonly not better than the previous ones. Now, the situation is that people collect materials and present to syllabus committees and manage to include them by internal and external sources. Thus the publisher takes away millions of rupees and unfortunately the poor citizens are forced to spend huge money on children's education. Today, education is the most profitable business in the world. For a poor country like India, it is a permanent financial and economic problem.<sup>177</sup>

Isn't it a big joke with education that people cannot think of education without fees, costly syllabus books, various kinds of stationeries, tuition and so on. Today education has been made a market. There are various types of people who rob of the students under the sponsorship of the government. The poor people of the country are in trouble how to arrange education for their children. While Muslims, throughout their history, gave education free of cost or at very nominal fees, if it was. Even today's thousands of madrasas provide free education to hundreds of thousands of children.

#### **Shortcomings in Modern Syllabus System**

The modern education has given religion no place in its system that is a big lapse in itself, because it is undoubtedly known that the religion has proved as the strongest power in the world that has united almost all human beings from the very beginning of the world. Religions have deep impression among followers that can play a wonderful role to use the sentiments of any faith to a right direction. But the modern education, avoiding religion has neglected a vital part of man's life. Manzoor Ahmad says that it is negation of an important field of human thought and activities:

In the value system of neither the East nor the West do divinity and religion occupy a place of any serious study.

The need to satisfy a person's spiritual craving is not felt. This is, in fact a negation of an important field of human thoughts and activities. An educational system, which overlooks or negates the spiritual carvings of the individual by cutting him from his religion moorings, makes a man or a society rootless. It may produce excellent engineers, competent doctors and learned philosophers but it would fail to imbibe in the younger generation righteous and ethical sensibility without which the other capabilities are not of much avail. Even alighted Western thinkers realize this weakness of their system. Mr. M.V.C. Jaffreys says in his "Aims of Education", "It stands to reason that if education is supremely concerned with the quality of people, it needs the inspiration and of some vision of what human beings ought to be; some notion of what is a good kind of person. This is a moral and spiritual quality and one to which it is very difficult to get a clear and united answer in these days of confused and disintegrating values." In fact, this nihilistic system of education, when thoughtlessly introduces to our society poses a threat not only to the Muslim value system but also to the future civilization itself.<sup>178</sup>

Since the West was disgusted form religion because of historic bloody conflict between the Church and people of Renaissance so it ousted religion from all spheres of life and confined it to Church. When they occupied Muslim nations they imposed the same things on Muslims also whereas Islam did not clash with science. Even after independence Muslim countries carried on the same system that the colonial masters left behind. This is major problem of the existing education system that religion has been put aside that can play greater role to sharpen the minds and fill them with spirit.

178. Manzoor Ahmad, *Islamic Education: Redefinition of Aims and Methodology*, pp. 3-4, Genuine Publications & Media, Delhi.

177. *Ibid*, pp. 376-8, Delhi.



Here in India, the education system of Lord Macauley aimed at producing government employees. Therefore, this idea has occupied the minds of our student and they don't think beyond a handsome employment and source of income. Education is linked only to employment and materialism. In fact it is a humiliation of a thing like education. Islam has given education importance like worship and regarded it a source of achieving piety, nobility and humanity. The rewards and virtues of education that the Glorious Qur'an and Hadith consist of are enough for a Muslim to understand the holiness of education.

### Change of Objectives of the Education

It was a serious negligence on our part that we adopted the Western education with its all system and characteristics without considering values of religion and its role in building human relationship. So, Muslim student finds a system that is entirely contrary to his beliefs and it leaves him in a difficult situation. As a result of the fight between the education and beliefs, the student forsakes thinking on the serious matters of life and pays his attention only to earn bread and butter. He sidelines all the beliefs and takes for granted that religion is impracticable.

The fault lies here that we teach the modern sciences with the same pattern and mentality that the West teaches. Whereas, the religion of West i.e. Christianity has failed to adapt itself with the developing science and consequently the followers were forced to revolt against it. The case is different with Muslims where their religion Islam instead of being a hurdle in the way of scientific advancements, it facilitates them to go ahead parallel with the changing world. So, the most necessary thing for us is to create space for the Islamic vision of education and learning in modern education system and to free it from pure materialistic thinking. For instance, natural science is a source to deliberate on the might of Allah and create a sense of submission into mankind. But,

a today's science student has taken for granted that the religious beliefs are contradicting science. There is nothing in science that makes him a rebel against religion it is only the materialistic mindset that the West has floated in its education system. The science student from the first day believes that the entire universal system is running due to its mechanical developments. The Glorious Qur'an invites people to reflect in the matters of the universe. So, the person who reads the facts of universe in the Qur'an he comes to a conclusion that this accurate and cohesive universal system can never come into being on its own, certainly there is any power who controls over all things. Therefore the need of the age is to stress upon Islamic values and teachings in education system whatever time it may take. It is of no use to teach one or two hour of *Islamiyat* to the students.

There are some major changes recommended by a group of Ulama in Pakistan around 1970 for national education system. It is just an example how Muslim can bring changes and infuse Islamic spirit in to the curricula. Likewise, Malik Abdul Aziz University in Makkah convened an international Muslim Education Conference on 12/4/1397AH (corresponding to 31/3/1977) in which it passed resolutions that has the same spirit and demand.

1. The Philosophy that is imparted in the modern educational institutions jumps off from Greek Philosophy to the Philosophy of Europe after Renaissance. The students think that the medieval period is an age of inactivity. This age is called as Dark Age in the history of sciences and arts. But this age is dark only for Europe. This was the age when Muslims lit more than half of the world and in Europe itself Spain was dazzling with civilization and advancements.
2. The entire world admits that the recent developments of science are due to the experimental and observational way of research instead of theoretical

- and imaginal basis. Muslims have established this way of thinking and diverted the science to a new highway of research and advancement on which it is surging ahead even today with amazing inventions and discoveries. Despite all these facts, our students are unaware of the great Muslim scientists like Khalid bin Yazid, Zakriya Razi, Ibn Sina, Khowarizmi, Abu Raihan, Bairooni, Farabi, Ibn Miskwaih, Ibn Rushd, Al-Kindi, Abu Muhammad Khuhbudi, Jabir bin Hayyan and Musa bin Shakir.
3. The student of economics believes that there are only two schools of thoughts in the world; capitalism and socialism. He does not even know that Islam has its own economic system that is different from the two. He knows only that the founder of economics is Adam Smith, but he could not sense even that the Islamic jurists before Smith, especially, Ibn Khaldoon and Shah Waliullah have laid down the foundation of economics.
  4. In Politics, the student only know the Platonic and the European politics, whereas Islam also has a complete system of politics, but the biased West has discarded it from its educational system.
  5. The same case is with Sociology. Perhaps, no just person will deny the fact the first editor of sociology is Ibn Khaldoon, but the present did not even indicate that Muslims also have done any work on the very subject.
  6. Psychology now has been taught at larger scales, but the valuable researches and the discoveries about the human self Ulama of Tasawwuf have carried out has no place in the system.
  7. Our education system is also full of Western thoughts and viewpoints. The in-depth discussions on principles of law that the Islamic jurists have compiled are totally ignored.

8. Likewise, the student, in Math, is taught the ways of interest with details, but he remains unaware of the ways of Miras and Zakat. Similarly, in Geography, a student must be taught the direction of Kaba, the Salah times and other things related to Islam.<sup>179</sup>

It is true that this is a strenuous and long-termed process, and it is possible that we could not see the outcome of this effort because building up a nation's ideology inevitably takes time. The seed that Lord Macauley had sown in India in 1853 bore fruit in 20th and 21st centuries. So, if we did not dare to seed a new plant we will always be deprived of independence and mental freedom.

Undoubtedly, the majority of the Islamic population wants Islam to be implemented as a living system of life but every Islamic country has two types of Muslims who are everywhere in minority. One group is that which revolts against Islam and does not give it any importance except for some occasions where any political or temporary interest arises, while the other group respects Islam and gives it importance too but it is too weak to utter even a single word against current theories and ideas. As a result this group is very confused and many times tends to twist Qur'an and Hadith according to the modern theories.

Though the two groups, as per their numbers, are in minority in the entire Islamic world but regrettably the two groups have occupied all the key positions and in real meaning they are ruling the Islamic countries. The problem is that the education system that they have gone through was laid down for the purpose to overawe the minds of Muslims from the west and prepare a team rebellion to Islamic thoughts. Those who prepared the education system they have successfully got the result. Now, it is our duty to rectify the lapses, otherwise we will keep on lagging behind.

179. Mufti Taqi Usmani, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, pp. 18-19, Deoband.



### Co-education in Modern Institutions

One of the worst things in modern education system is that Muslims also have adopted co-education system. Mufti Taqi Usmani regards it as dangerous for some reasons:

1. Islam has not allowed boys and girls to be educated in one class.
2. The standard of education has gone lower due to this system.
3. Allah has created men and women for special purposes so their education must also be different according to their objectives of life.
4. Not to speak of the moral commotion that has enveloped the students of today's modern institutions.<sup>180</sup>

The Muslim Education Conference, convened by Malik Abdul Aziz University in Makkah on 12/4/1397AH (corresponding to 31/3/1977) in its final session passed more than 40 resolutions, one of them was related to co-education:

As per women's education is concerned the conference stands that the nations which have adopted co-education system and ignored the women's purpose of creation and their social character in a society, they experience severe moral chaos and family split-up in the society. The Conference sees these matters as contrary to Islam and unsuitable for healthy tendencies.<sup>181</sup>

So the Conference recommends the Islamic world to prepare a separate education system for girls that educate them separately from boys at every stage of the education and that is based of scientific footings. This system should be in harmony with women's motive of creation and their required characters in the society. This system should be in accordance

180. Usman, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, 27.

181. *Ibid.*

with the healthy trends that Islam has envisaged for believers so that the family structure may be erected and facilitate to promote piety and nobility. With these reservations effective measures should be taken to spread education among women, for, Islam has obliged man and women both to acquire knowledge.<sup>182</sup>

### Modern Education: In the Eyes of Shibli, Iqbal and Others

Allama, Shibli Nomani who himself stayed at Aligarh with Sir Sayyid for a period of time and who headed a movement to incorporate modern education into religious madrasas, had a very surprising opinion regarding the college people as he had the same about madrasa people. He says: "The English-learning people are quite useless. Not to speak of religion, they are unaware of broadmindedness, true freedom, courage and enthusiasm for progress. They only display their coats and dresses."<sup>183</sup>

Maulana Abul Kalam Aazad (1888-1958), a well-known freedom fighter, first Education Minister of Independent India and progressive man of literature also could not shut his eyes from what he saw in the colleges. He says:

The reason that I always complain of the modern educated people is that I find them far from each and every past virtue which is not even replaced by new one. They have lost very thing from our past values, manners and style of living. After manner and civilization, they sacrificed their religion. No matter, if they lost something they will gain something in return. But the question is 'what did they gain?' Did they get education? No. Manners, civilised life? No. An English life? No, nothing. What a misfortune is it then!<sup>184</sup>

182. Usman, *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, pp. 63-64.

183. *Ikram Mauj-e-Kausar*, p. 227.

184. *Ibid.*, pp. 258-59.

Aligarh College (now Aligarh Muslim University), which Sir Sayyid built for modern education, was an ideal and the best institution of its kind, but what was the result. Shaikh Ikram analyses the same:

Aligarh College neither produced Haali (Maulana Altaf Hussein Haali, a pillar of Urdu poetry and literature) and Shibli nor set up any academic tradition. Most important and practical objective of the college became to nurse students who, having learnt sciences and arts may become a part of the government. Governmental employment that Aligarh aimed at resulted in a low-standard materialism. In spite of modern and systematic education the Aligarh College students could not reach the height to which, the conservative but spiritually high, founders of the college reached. Those who acquired knowledge on the mats of mosque they became statesmen like Sir Sayyid, Waqar-ul-Mulk and Muhsinu-ul-Mulk. Those who were almost ignorant of English and had no access to the Western literature they founded natural poetry and modern literature but those who learnt in the splendid buildings of the college and those who had access to best Western teachers and world literature they were employed in ordinary offices due to weakness of character and lowness of the objective.<sup>185</sup>

185. *Ibid*, p. 128.

## 8

# MODERNIZATION OF MADRASAS

Here are two things different from each other modification of madrasa syllabus and its modernization. As far the matter of modification and bringing necessary changes are concerned, those who undergo through the syllabus may be trained as good *Aalim*. The changes that help a madrasa student to grow into beneficial and farsighted preacher of Islam are admirable and welcomed by the madrasa people, as it was mentioned above in detail. The movement started by Nadwatul Ulama is related to the same aimed at modifying the syllabus and adapting it to the changing world. But, changes that turn madrasa students into any thing other than a good *Aalim* are in no way acceptable to them. Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia are two examples of the latter changes which during due course of time merged into other government institutes and could not maintain their distinction.

The issue to modernize madrasas is quite old. According to Qamruddin, the movement for introducing modern subjects in madrasas was started in the 1980s by Aligarh



Muslim University.<sup>186</sup> In 1994 the Human Resource Development Minister launched a scheme of modernizing madrasas. At the international level the United States pulled the trigger against the Muslims Tactful engineering of 9/11 and linking with the Talibaans of Afghanistan finally resulted in Western sponsored campaign and physical assault against Muslim and their educational institutions. Many world rulers including the USA President GW Bush stressed the need to modernize the madrasa curriculum. The Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, under heavy foreign pressure announced a scheme of registering and modernizing madrasas. In one his early visit to US, President Bush discussed this matter with him in the White House. The Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deoba also joined the chorus to regulate the madrasas in his country. The Human Recourses Development Ministry once again has revealed its plan to modernize madrasas in order to get them in to national mainstream.<sup>187</sup> Not only the HRD Ministry, but also the Prime Minister himself and Home Ministry besides Gujrat Chief Minister Modi have emphasized on modernizing the madrasas. The Vishv Hindu Prishad (VHP) and Rashtriya Sevaksevam Sangh (RSS) leaders, every day come up with their suggestion of either modernizing the madrasas or closing them down throughout the country. Moreover, there are many intellectuals, Muslims and non-Muslims, who also believe that modernization of madrasas is due.

### Modernization: A Political Issue

These are two different groups among those who give the call to modernize the madrasas. One group is of the politicians who look for vested political interests in the issue.

186. Qamruddin (2002), "Modernizing Madrasas", *The Times of India*, 8 July, former reader at the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi.

187. *Inquilab*, 15 February 2002, Mumbai.

The others are intellectuals and scholars who see the matter from another angle. Though the two have stressed on modernization but they differ in objectives. Some see political motivation behind the move from the governments:

Madrasas have been involved in imparting in multi-disciplinary education including medicine, science geography besides the religious disciplines of Islam. It is unfortunate that madrasas have been in the news for all the wrong reasons of late. Madrasas should remain within the academic domain and should not be exploited to achieve political objectives. Certain countries have just done the opposite. People, who have misinterpreted the essence of Islam in the absence of adequately qualified teachers, have contaminated the pious edifice of madrasas. Madrasas in Pakistan have been used for political purposes and are facing the consequences of such indulgence.<sup>188</sup>

The madrasa system of education and its continuity in India has been a topic for hot discussion since the colonial regime. The relevance of this system has also been debated and discussed at various fora of intellectuals inside and outside the country. With the growing militancy in Kashmir as elsewhere in the country and in the South Asian region as a whole, madrasa system of education has come to the centre-stage of discussions. And this is the point from where the demand for modernization of madrasa on the Indian soil gets strengthened. But the sad part of the present time is that the BJP Government has been targeting these madrasas as breeding ground of conservatism and obscurantism. It is further alleged that madrasas create fundamentalist

188. Qamruddin (2002), "Modernizing Madrasas", *The Times of India*, 8th July, National Council for Educational Research and Training, (NCERT), New Delhi.

minds; they have also allegedly been places where anti-national elements are being produced. I want to submit that these charges are untenable. In fact they have never been victims to anti-national sentiments.<sup>189</sup>

The last and most important dimension of their existence is how definitions of secularism are limited. People thought modernization would act as a melting pot of ethnic and religious identities. But they have hardened. Madrasas act as spaces for the protection of their cultural and religious identity from economic processes which they think will destroy their heritage.<sup>190</sup>

It is the duty of every section of Indian society to help in the mainstreaming of this section. But the issue of modernization of madrasa education brings up the vested interests of fundamentalist elements trying to protect their turf and the political system, which strives to utilize the backward for electoral gain.<sup>191</sup>

It is the history of madrasas that they have always been independent, even under Muslim rulers. According to Muhammad Akhtar Siddiqui: "Right from their inception in medieval period, all big and small madrasas have enjoyed full autonomy in all aspects of their functioning. They have been independent in framing their own curricula, using their own modes of teaching and training and examining their students internally in their own ways."<sup>191a</sup> Even in the

189. Muzaffar Alam (2002), "Modernisation of Madrasas in India", *The Hindu*, Open Page, 23 April.

190. Mohammed Talib, "Madrasas: Their raison d'être", *The Week*, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

191. D. Bandyopadhyay, (2002), "Madrasa Education and the Condition of Indian Muslims", *EPW Commentary*, April 20, <http://www.hvk.org>.

191a. Mohammad Akhtar Siddiqui, "Developments & Trends in Madrasa Education", *Education & Muslims in India since Independence*, p. 77, Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi.

medieval period when many of them received grants and endowments from the rulers and nobles they were never brought under the control of a common regulating or examining body". These are reasons that create doubts in Muslim minds and they see every step taken by the government with suspicion and fear:

Now the question that remains to be answered is that what does the Indian Government mean when it emphasizes that madrasas in India need to be modernized. Many circles of Muslim scholars apprehend that in the name of modernization of madrasas, the government may have been trying to deprive them of their independence and autonomy. If the case were so then certainly it would amount to violation of the fundamental rights provided by the Constitution to every community of the country to run its own seats of learning according to its choice.<sup>192</sup>

Madrasas all over the country have not reacted very enthusiastically to a modernization scheme launched by the human resource development ministry six years ago, primarily due to fears that the acceptance of governmental assistance could lead to interference in their functioning. A scheme for the modernization of madrasas was launched by the ministry in 1993-94 under 15-point programme drawn up by the empowered committee on minorities' education.<sup>193</sup>

Even the Muslims who recommend madrasas to modernize their curricula, they also have the same feeling and want all the process to be carried out in a peaceful climate and not by force:

192. Muzaffar Alam (2002), "Modernization of Madrasas in India", *The Hindu*, Open Page, 23 April.

193. *The Asian Age*, 13 November 1999, Mumbai.



As a leading Indian Muslim social activist and intellectual, Nejatullah Siddiqui, writes in his recently-published Urdu work, *Dini Madaris: Masa'il Aur Taqazey* (Religious Madrasas: Problems and Prospects), there is a growing realization among the Muslims of the pressing need for madrasas to reform their syllabi to enable their students to face the challenges of modern life and to evolve a more relevant understanding of their faith. But, many Muslims insist, this cannot be imposed by force. It is only in a climate of peace and security, when Muslims are free from what they might perceive to be threats to their faith and identity, that madrasas can begin a process of reform. Instigating attacks against them and fanning the flames of anti-Muslim terror will not only undermine the conditions for reform, but might even make the fear of militancy a self-fulfilling prophecy. The orchestrated campaign against the madrasas of India by extremist Hindu elements, and backed by the centre and state governments, must be seen as yet another assault on the rights of the Muslims and on institutions that are basic to the preservation and promotion of their faith and their sense of identity.<sup>194</sup>

The politicians when they talk of modernization they, somehow or the other, link it with fundamentalism and terrorism. From the USA to the island of Philippine the call of modernizing madrasas was heard only after September 11. The Prime Minister of India, while addressing a gathering in Goa in May stressed the need to modernize madrasas that is considered to be the hardest speech on so-called Islamic extremism by him. Though not in open words, but they believe that extremism and fundamentalism, which are root cause of terrorism, are created and nurtured in madrasas' campus. The report submitted in 2001 by Group of Ministers

(GoM) that comprised Lal Krishan Advani, Home Minister, Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister, George Fernandez, Defense Minister, Yashwant Sinha, Finance Minister, all Union Ministers, clearly linked madrasas with terrorism and regarded them as a serious threat to national security. The report suggested vigorous implementation of the madrasa-modernizing scheme.

### Modernization Call By Scholars

The scholars and intellectuals who want madrasas to modernize take the issue as a source to widen the area of influence of madrasas and to increase the chances for Ulama to play even greater roles in the service of nation and community. This is why I distinguished the two under two titles. Here are some extracts that will help us to understand what kinds of modernizations they want and what are the things they appeal for.

The curriculum has remained stationary for decades and hardly relevant to the needs of contemporary world. A survey of Madrasa Curriculum in India from 13th century to till now revealed that no significant change could be brought about in it. Short of skill necessary for living in modern world, the madrasa students are bound to remain marginalized and away from the mainstream of India Society. The students are not prepared and encouraged to be rational or logical in their life. They are pumped with extreme sentiments and rambling discourses even to lay down their life for the cause of Islam. It becomes a vicious circle because every year new generation of lumpen and vagabond passes out from these madrasas.<sup>195</sup>

194. Yoginder Sikand (2001), *The Indian State and the Madrasa*, No. 2, October, [www.ercwilcom.net](http://www.ercwilcom.net).

195. Fahimuddin, "Globalization and Growth of Madrasas in India", [www.bsos.com](http://www.bsos.com).

For over 110 years, with the establishment of Nadwatul Ulama in 1894, the need to reform and modernize the curriculum is being continuously felt but no radical change has been effected. As a result madrasa education remains completely book-centred instead of being child-centred. All the subjects taught in any modern institution including technical and professional subjects and computer education should be introduced, keeping in view current educational needs and enabling the students to be employable.<sup>196</sup>

People who are not directly attached with the madrasa system they mostly propose that madrasas should impart standard teaching of Science, Mathematics, Engineering etc., so that the student coming out of madrasas may be able to go ahead with the pace of time. However, sincere this suggestion may be but it holds no water. Those who are unaware of the objectives of madrasas come up with these types of proposals.

Though a Muslim has been fully allowed to acquire the knowledge of the modern sciences and arts but it does not mean that madrasas should include them into their syllabus. Yes, madrasas should introduce only the sciences like English, Modern Economics, Politics and Law, that may be helpful for Ulama to propagate Islam and remove the doubts and misconceptions spread by non-Muslims. Reason being, the madrasas aim at producing Ulama who are master in Qur'an, Hadith and concerning sciences which are about 17 in number. These sciences require mental peace and full attention; therefore it is nearly impossible to produce a talented *Aalim* while he is an expert Doctor, Scientist or Economist. It was the case in every age, but in this age of specialization it is fairly clear that if any one wishes to master

196. Qamruddin (2002), "Modernizing Madrasas", *The Times of India*, 8 July, National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi.

in Medical science, no rational person is going to object why is he/she is not becoming Engineer. If an institution imparts scientific education, nobody objects why the institutions does not introduce Literature, Poetry and Commerce. Likewise, no Law College was suggested to teach Astronomy and no Commerce College was asked to include Engineering. Mufti Taqi Usmani (who himself being a Mufti is an MA in Eng.) asserts:

The question is, if the madrasas have focused their all attention on Islamic Sciences, and they produce no Doctor, no Engineer, no Scientist and no Economist, so why people create havoc. Are the Islamic sciences, such as Tafseer, Hadith, Fiqh, Kalam and others, not too valuable to be taught in special institutions and produce Ulama specialized in these sciences? If someone thinks so we can only regret, but if anyone feels the importance of these sciences, he will, easily, come to know that the demand is so superficial and contrary to fact.<sup>197</sup>

Some people suggest madrasas to arrange handicraft, art and technical education for the students so that the Ulama may not be a burden on the society and needy to the people. According to Mufti Taqi Usmani this idea is wrong due to two reasons.

First, madrasas have been established for a particular purpose of producing *Ulama* having command over Islamic Sciences that require full time and attention. In today's complex life it is experience that, after being engaged in technical field, service of Islam remains only a pleasant dream that never comes true. It is commonly seen that a madrasa student who learned technical education also and employed he could not pay attention to the other side. And, a madrasa student having engaged in handicrafts and technical work could not maintain any

197. *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, p. 88.



relation with Islamic Sciences. This is why it is not proper for madrasas to impart modern arts."<sup>198</sup>

Second, it is rather a surprising concept if a person is supposed to fulfill the need of the society and receives money in return he is considered a burden on the society and dependant on others. It is known to all that a person who has knowledge of a particular field and serves the society in the same, he earns livelihood from that field. This particular person is not considered as burden on the society and dependant. It is a part of the social system on which the entire building of society erects. If a doctor, an engineer, an economist and a scientist serves the society and in return he receives financial benefits so it not fair to think that he is dependant and burden on the society. Doesn't the Islamic Society need Ulama who can guide it in religious field, educate Muslim children, defend Islam and devote their life to safeguard Muslims' future.<sup>199</sup>

People believe that madrasa students are not able to face the modern world since they are not taught English, Mathematics and other necessary subjects; that is why they suffer a lot during their public life. The fact is that madrasa system has a very developed system of maktab and madrasas where the students are given education for some years before stepping into Arabic courses. In UP, Bihar and some other states of India students are admitted for five year maktab education where they are taught Islamiyat, Urdu, Hindi, English, fundamentals of Math, Science, Social Science, Geography and so on. So it is not fair to say that madrasas have excluded the students from having the knowledge of modern things to lead a good life. Having passed the exam in these maktab a student is quite capable to go either to any college or to any madrasa.

198. *Ibid*, p. 89.

199. *Ibid*.

Some people want madrasas to change their syllabus and system so that their degree may be approved by the world universities and the students may get chance to learn therein and apply for the government jobs. According to Mufti Taqi Usmani and Muzaffar Alam:

We don't see this idea as right. The madrasa syllabus should only be seen from the point of view that what are the needs of a skilled and insightful *Aalim* and how can we meet them. The amendments that are necessary from this point of view should be made, but a change, which is contrary to the spirit of madrasas so that their degree may be accepted in other universities, is against the basic objectives of madrasas.<sup>200</sup>

Here two things are important which have to be kept in mind. First, what is the purpose of madrasa education and second, how have they historically accomplished this task. The purpose of madrasa is not to produce engineers and doctors or for that matter technocrats but to produce scholars to interpret Islam in relation to the demands of the specific time. For example, what a Muslim scholar needs to know to take Islam to the people was not quite the same in the early Nineteenth century as it is today. In other words, the madrasa equips a scholar not for simple scholastic interpretation of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Prophet of Islam but to cater to the changing needs of the Muslim society. This brings us to the second issue, which is to see how the madrasas from the days of early colonial rule have been handling this demand.<sup>201</sup>

The problem is that people see madrasas from financial point of view. They see that those who come out of madrasas they are hardly paid good salaries in madrasas and mosques and

200. *Hamara Talimi Nizam*, p. 90.

201. Muzaffar Alam (2002), "Modernisation of Madrasas in India", *The Hindu*, Open Page, 23 April.

they lag behind in the field of government employment. Here, the idea comes into their mind that madrasas should include modern sciences; art, handicraft and technical education into their syllabus, and madrasa degrees should be recognized in universities. Here are two things that people generally don't ponder upon. I ask why the madrasa product are poorly paid, why Muslims fail to realize that madrasa education is also a necessity of Muslim community like other necessities without which it cannot guard its entity and identity. When they fulfill a duty and provide the community with religious leadership why the people do not care for their needs. Secondly, looking in the matter only from financial point of view, those who suggest government employment for Ulama do not they know that in a country like India millions of modern educated youths are wandering in the streets unemployed and are compelled to indulge in criminal activities or to do any thing that is below their standard. If the madrasa product do not increase the crowd and content themselves with lesser income then what is the problem.

Some people advise madrasas to introduce modern science and technology and modernize their method of teaching. If they think that madrasa graduates are financially distressed so the modern science and art will enable them to earn money. When the madrasa people sacrifice their time and serve the Ummah the Muslims are responsible to free them from financial aspect. And if the suggestion means that modern sciences and arts should be included in view of the religious requirements, then they should keep in mind the fact that the madrasas have always carried out addition and deletion, the same continued even today. The madrasas are to impart religious education, purify the soul and moralize the students along with defense of Islam against false theories and mischief.<sup>202</sup>

202. Maulana Asrarul Haq Qasmi (2000), "Dini Madaris ke Qiyam ka Maqsad Dini Uloom ki Talim Hai", *Nai Dunia*, 5 to 11 December.

### Madrasas Reformed their Syllabi

Now it is so clear that madrasas should not be modernized in a way that produces doctors, engineers, scientists and so on against their aims of establishment. And, the madrasas advocate such changes that help an *Aalim* to be a good and useful one in the context of the changing world. It is not so that madrasas reject entirely the reformation of syllabus and students' financial aspect but they have adjusted with it in a manner that may not affect their spirit. The madrasa syllabus basically has is divided into three categories.

1. *Aadadia*, basic education that enables student for higher religious education.
2. *Aalia* sciences that help student to understand Islamic sciences.
3. *Aalia* that means pure Islamic sciences like Tafseer, Hadith, Fiqh etc.

In view of the modern requirements, partly changes can be brought on the first two maintaining the main spirit of Dars-e-Nizami. The *Adadia* classes may include necessary modern sciences and local languages as it is in states particularly in UP under Dini Talimi Council. Likewise, modern sciences may be included in *Aalia* keeping a balance between them to meet the modern needs. But, the *A,alia* should not be changed anyhow.

Last but not the least, the changes in the madrasas are being brought about not to link them up with the modern system of education or to bring their graduates closer to the government job opportunities; these changes are aimed at ensuring the very existence of madrasas in India.<sup>203</sup>

Madrasas have already begun reforming their syllabus and adapting them to the modern world requirements. Here are

203. Muzaffar Alam (2000), "Modernization of Madrasas in India", *The Hindu*, Open Page, 23 April, 2002.



some people, especially from media and modern background, they seem to be satisfied with changes that madrasas have brought into their curricula:

On the other hand, lots of developments have taken place in the field of methodology and technology of teaching and teacher education. In recent years many madrasa managements have come to recognize both these realities. With a view to partly overcome the weakness of the monitorial system or the shortcomings arising due to no teacher training, and partly to take advantage of the new developments in teacher training system so that the quality of teaching in madrasas could be improved, they have begun to resort to some in-service teacher training programmes for their teachers. In the last few years, the West Bengal Madrasa Education Board, Centre for Promotion of Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Uttar Pradesh Falah-e-Aam Society, Al Majlis Al Talim Islami in Bihar, Kerala, Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow and other organizations have organized several training programmes, which were generally meant for maktab teachers. A properly drawn course outline based on philosophy of education, psychology of education, methodology of teaching, school organization, Islamiyat, etc., is used in all these courses which are now being held every year.<sup>204</sup>

Let it be known that madrasas are marching forward with the time. Technology courses such as computer science are being progressively introduced. This belies the mistaken impression that madrasas are closed-door traps for the youth and a breeding ground for communal hatred.<sup>205</sup>

204. Muhammad Akhtar Siddiqui, "Developments and Trends in Madrasa Education", *Education & Muslims in India since Independence*, p. 79, Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi.

205. Rizwan Ullah (2002), "Floodlights on Madrasas", 19 June, *Milli Gazette*, Delhi.

This pattern has been replicated in many other parts of Asia, officials said, although they emphasized that most of the religious schools are a vital part of local education and have modernized their teaching to cover not just the study of Islamic values and rules, but secular subjects such as mathematics, computer studies and European languages.<sup>206</sup>

The charge of mental stagnation levelled against Indian madrasas does not seem to be true if somebody takes pain to go through the dramatic changes that Indian madrasas are ushering in their curricula now. As a matter of fact, madrasas in India have been undergoing vigorous reforms in the recent decades to enable their graduates to keep pace with the fast changing world and meet the requirements of the community at all stages. After going through the curricula in vogue in important madrasas like Darul-Uloom Deoband, Darul-Uloom Nadvatul-Ulama, Lucknow, Jamiatul-Falah, Bilaria Gunj, Jamiatul-Islah at Saraimeer and Jamia Salafiah at Varanasi, all in Uttar Pradesh, one has to confess that the charges of stagnation and statusquoism against the madrasas in India are baseless and unfounded.<sup>207</sup>

Muzaffar Alam analyses briefly the curricula of some famous Indian madrasas, which have undergone reforms and changes. It shed light that charges of stagnation and inertia are just due to misconception or a part of propaganda against them.

Not to speak of small madrasas the well-known Islamic seminary Darul-Uloom at Deoband introduced computer application in its curriculum in 1994. Apart

206. Michael Richardson (2002), "Asians take a closer look at Islamic Schools", *International Herald Tribune*, 12 February.

207. Muzaffar Alam, (2002), "Modernization of Madrasas in India", *The Hindu*, Open Page, 23 April.

from computer, other technical courses have also been given due place in the curriculum of the seminary. Let us look at some of these. To begin with, Darul Uloom Deoband which teaches in the eight years of total duration of study modern disciplines like Modern Indian History, Islamic History, Civics, Geography, General Sciences including some information on Zoology, Botany, principles for health care, some chapters of the Indian Constitution, principles of economics, philosophical theories, life history of modern philosophers and computer applications. While discussing Darul-Uloom Nadwat-ul-Ulema at Lucknow, one should not forget that a fair knowledge of the English language has been a special feature of this Islamic seminary. Right from the day one, this seminary has adopted English Language and Literature as one of the elementary subjects. In its total 16 years duration of study it lays emphasis on English Language and Literature at par with other Islamic disciplines. From the primary level, it teaches various modern disciplines, especially English, Hindi, Science, Indian History, Economics almost up to the graduation level. Madrasatul-Ishah, which is the living expression of the dream of Allama Shibli and Allama Hameeduddin Farahi, provides knowledge of modern disciplines. It includes in its curriculum English Language and Literature, history of classical and modern philosophy almost up to the graduation level. Looking at the present curricula of above important madrasas and other madrasas like Jamiatul-hidaya in Rajasthan which teaches not only the afore-mentioned disciplines but Business Management, Commerce and Agriculture as well, one can easily substantiate that madrasas in India have already been modernising their syllabi for decades. And the most surprising aspect of the modernisation is that Jamia Mohammadia

Mansura at Malegaon (Maharashtra) produces medical practitioners, as medical science is one of the distinguishing features of this madrasa. One can say that the pace of modernization is a bit slow to reckon with, but the process as such cannot be denied.<sup>208</sup>

This year, Darul Uloom Deoband has launched Department of English Language and Literature (DELL) to train the students who complete their graduation course there on English writing, speaking, computer application and using all modern tools to communicate with world. Markazul Ma'arif Delhi and Mumabi (Branches of Markazul Ma'arif Hojai Assam) are two living examples that madrasa people are never ignorant of the developments in the world and their duties toward the. From 1994, they run especial English and computer courses for madrasa graduates so that they being a perfect *Aalim* may perform their duties in a better way.

208. Muzaffar Alam (2002), "Modernization of Madrasas in India", *The Hindu*, Open Page, 23 April.



## 9

## MISCONCEPTION REGARDING MADRASAS

Though for many years in past there was growing so-called concern regarding Islamic schools i.e. madrasas, but it seems to be intensified in recent days. After the three high jacked planes were banged to the twin towers of World Trade Centre in New York and Pentagon in Washington by some suspected Al-Qaeda suicide attackers on 11th September in 2001, the hue and cry has increased about madrasas. It is the gift of media that madrasas today have become an international issue. From a state assembly in India to White House their was a resounding that madrasas at least are a cause of concern in terms of peace and security. Since Al-Qaeda was believed to be based in Afghanistan where, at that time, the Taliban were in power who attributed themselves to madrasas of Deobandi school of thought in Pakistan. So with Taliban every madrasa, especially in South Asia, came under the shadow of doubt and from where the madrasas were branded as centres of fundamentalism and terrorism. In the next lines, we shall try to find out the truth in the light of facts that were expressed by many responsible persons.

### Al-Qaeda Men are not Madrasa Products

First of all, let us take Al-Qaeda, which is considered to be responsible for suicide attacks on USA. Perhaps, it is known to all that A-Qaeda members are highly educated at modern schools while many of them even learnt in US and other and Western countries. Osama bin Laden, the Al-Qaeda chief has done his engineering in USA. None of the 18 hijackers was product of a madrasa; all of them were educated in Western countries some even got pilot training in USA. In an interview the former President of Afghanistan Burhanuddin Rabbani said, (when he was asked that madrasas are suspected as centres of terrorism, and he also had graduated at Al-Azhar University in Cairo):

It is a propaganda. None of those who are labeled as terrorists is a product of a madrasa. Osama bin Laden himself is an engineer and his deputy is a doctor. Those who bear the responsibility to kill Anwar Sadat they also either were engineers or graduates from military schools. There is not a single member of Al-Qaeda who has not done his graduation from theological schools.<sup>209</sup>

Hasan Kamal also agrees with Rabbani: "There is a group in our country that has an allergy towards madrasas. The group has intensified its attack after 9/11 whereas the fact is that none of those who are said to carry out the attack was a product of a maktab or a madrasa. All of them were highly educated at the most modern institutions."<sup>210</sup>

It should have been so that the USA and other world powers, instead of blaming madrasas, should have reviewed their policies towards Islamic world that are considered to be the root cause of so-called hatred against the West. The Al-Qaeda

209. *Al-Jamiat Weekly*, 15-21 March, 2002, New Delhi; from *News Week*, interviewer Babak Deh Khan.

210. *Inquilab*, Mumbai, Hasan Kamal, *Madrassa Azmat-e-Rafta Phir Pasakte Hain*, 25 August, 2002.

chief, Bin Laden, in one of his videotapes just after the attack on USA, though categorically denied having hand in the attacks but regarded it a reaction of USA's disastrous policies about the West Asia specially and the Islamic world at large. But, the USA, continuing its political, diplomatic and military support to Israel, did not pay any heed to it and put the blame on madrasas in Afghanistan and Pakistan which are far remotely connected to the events. In fact, this face of America's war against terrorism is quite ugly. The word 'crusade' that G.W. Bush pronounced unintentionally (as he later admitted) when he was first reacting to the attack seems to be true in the prospect of worldwide crackdown on Islamic nations and organizations. Ibn-ul-Hasan Abbasi regards this as a long hatched conspiracy:

Every just man who will realize the new campaign against madrasas in the global perspective he will come to a conclusion that it is a weapon that the West has adopted to curb them and lessen the growing trends to Islamic education. After the defeat of Communism, the West is readying to fight the Islamic World. Islam with its strong teachings, shining traditions, healthy tendencies and high moral values is shaping up in to a big challenge for the West. Islam is growing fast in there. The Western media, for a long time, has launched propaganda against Islam. The policy-makers of the West have dug the reason that madrasas are the fountainheads form where Islamic society gets life and energy.<sup>211</sup>

### Indian Madrasas and Politics

Seizing the opportunity some elements in India who were for a long time allergic to madrasas fanned campaign against the educational and religious rights of the Muslims. They found a good time to fling mud on madrasas and link them

211. Ibnul Hasan Abbasi, *Dini Madaris*, pp. 67-68.

to international terrorism, which are widely believed to be threat to global peace and civilized world. With General Pervez Musharraf's recent announcements to reform and regulate madrasas in Pakistan they have intensified their campaign even more. The VHP and RSS leaders come up with new suggestions every day but they are too less important to be paid attention. But, when it comes to politicians and responsible ones it becomes serious. He (The then Minister of State for Home Vidyasagar Rao) also disclosed that there were 31,850 madrasas in the country and that 11,453 were in the border areas. He added that 'Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) was trying to exploit and mislead students of these institutions' (*The Telegraph*, Kolkata, 20 March 2002). Weeks later the same gentleman said in Kozhikode on April 9 that 'terrorist activities' are taking place in 'some madrasas' in the state of Kerala (*The Hindu*, 10 April 2002). Days later the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, on 24 April, sought 'strict action against religious fundamentalist institutions which have come up in the country, particularly along India-Nepal border, with the help of Pakistan ISI for indoctrinating young minds to wage holy war against India.'<sup>212</sup>

Earlier, Group of Ministers of the Government of India had released on 23 May last year an extraordinary report on national security, which may be considered the most important official document issued by the current BJP-led government of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The report, titled 'Reforming the National Security System,' was prepared by the four-member Group of Ministers (GoM), which was headed by Home Minister L.K. Advani, the known BJP hawk. It identified madrasas as a source of threat to national security.<sup>213</sup>

212. *Kashmir Times*, 25 April 2002; "Crusade against Madrasas in India", Editorial: 1-15 June 2002, *The Milli Gazette*, New Delhi.

213. *Ibid.*



On Sep 29, Union Home Minister L.K. Advani chaired a meeting which resolved to crack down on illegal madrasas which have mushroomed in the last 5 years and, according to a Home Ministry report, "pose a threat to national security. And, last week, after the terrorist attack on Parliament, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee also joined this campaign. "The promoters of terrorism in our neighbourhood have even turned schools meant for religious education into factories of terror" he said."<sup>214</sup>

The report says, 'A recent phenomenon is the mushrooming of pan - Islamist militant outfits with links to radical organizations in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and some other West Asian countries. Funded by Saudi and Gulf sources, many new Madrasas have come up all over the country in recent years, especially in large numbers in the coastal areas of the west and in the border areas of West Bengal and Northeast. Reports of systematic indoctrination of Muslims in the border areas in fundamentalist ideology is detrimental to the country's communal harmony. The report has clearly stated that the secessionist movements in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in the country are being transformed into a pan-Islamic movement against India. The Taliban success in Afghanistan brought about a qualitative change in the security environment of the region. It also gave rise to groups of Jihadi forces. These forces were unlikely to stop in Afghanistan and Pakistan. These bands of religious fanatics are indulging in subversive activities and have expansionist designs. They will work relentlessly for the break up of the Indian Union.

This report attempts to assert that the entire 150 million member Indian Muslim community (through so-called fundamentalist movements and mushrooming madrasas) is a threat to India's internal security. Bangladeshi migrants

214. Saba Naqvi Bhaumik (2001), "Old School Ties", *Outlook*, New Delhi, 31 December.

have been identified as the second major source of insecurity. Their numbers have been put at "15 million" (it is not clear how this figure has been arrived at). These migrants are Muslims as well and, if the GoM (Group of Ministers) is to be believed, they are all busy leading lives as agents of Pakistan's military intelligence (ISI), or as smugglers, criminals and agents of foreign powers. In addition to Pakistan and Afghanistan, the usual suspects, these foreign powers are identified as "certain Muslim countries": namely Saudi Arabia, Sudan and "Gulf" countries. Ironically, the very same Government of India is currently going out of its way to improve relations with Muslim and Gulf countries. This kind of irresponsible generalization was hitherto the hallmark of the ultra-nationalist Hindu Sangh Parivar led by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). With this development, it became the first time that such statements enjoyed the Indian state's stamp of approval, due to the fact that it was ruled by a coalition led by the BJP, the political facade of the RSS.

It should also be noticed that now the government machinery has started terming the unrecognized and unaffiliated madrasas as 'illegal madrasas' whereas most of the madrasas are registered. Beside it, the madrasas that are not registered are in no way 'illegal' since minorities have right to establish their religious institutions. So, the term 'illegal madrasas' that is used by government machinery in itself is part of a long-drawn plan against madrasas of the country. Here are some extracts from different members of the society:

Ever since the Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition assumed office at the Centre in India, there has been a spate of attacks on Muslim madrasas (religious schools), mosques and *dargahs*, in various parts of the country. Senior Hindutva leaders, within and outside the government, have issued statements alleging that the Pakistan secret service agency, the Inter-Services

Intelligence (ISI), has infiltrated numerous madrasas all over the country, particularly in districts along the country's borders with Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. A detailed report of the Indian intelligence agencies claims that some of these madrasas are training grounds for ISI spies and anti-Indian 'terrorists'. The report goes on to suggest that the muftis, maulvis and imams in these religious schools may have been replaced by what it calls "highly fanatic agents of ISI", secretly working for the break-up of India. In May 2001, a ministerial group for the "reform of internal security" headed by Home Minister L.K. Advani, released a 137-page report that recommended, among other things, a close scrutiny of madrasas.<sup>215</sup>

Hitherto the BJP people were attacking the border madrasas but now madrasas even in the far-flung Kerala frighten them. However, they do not offer any proof. No madrasa has been ever named or taken to court, no terrorist has been ever found in their premises, no texts have been found which teach terrorism. The government as seen in Mr Sagar's own admission did not even make a survey about the so-called foreign aid to these madrasas, a fact which was also corroborated at about the same time by a minister of state under the ministry of human resource development. Then how does it behave a government bound by the Constitution and laws to spread such lies and canards day in and day out about the educational institutions of the country's largest religious minority? The idea, in fact, is to marginalize the community in all ways possible—something people of the same ilk tried in Gujarat recently and in the process brought bad name to the country in a way no one succeeded before. . . . If the madrasas are closed down

or curtailed or if their natural expansion and development, in keeping with the growth of the Muslim population, is stopped, hundreds of thousands of Muslim children will be denied the opportunities of free education. As a result, they will take to menial labour, suffer from unemployment or even take recourse to anti-social activities. But then this is exactly what the saffron brigade wants: marginalize them as much as possible and if they take to crime there is TADA and POTA even for petty criminals provided they are Muslims. It is time people who care about the country stopped this dirty game and told the current reckless rulers to offer proof for what they claim or shut up. It is time also for Muslim organizations to take these irresponsible officials to courts to force them to come up with evidence to back what they claim or keep their mouths firmly shut. Their vested interests and ocean of hate should not be allowed to cripple the country's largest minority.<sup>216</sup>

The omens are clear. India under the BJP is steadily moving towards becoming a fascist state where the "Other" will be actively and vigorously identified and persecuted by official agencies. Since *madrasas* and mosques, which have posed no threat throughout the centuries and which played a very active role in India's freedom struggle, are now regarded as enemy hideouts and ISI centers, an era of active persecution will begin, where the onus of proof of innocence will be on the victims, not on accusers and persecutors. To set the record straight, it is mostly Hindus who are caught spying for Pakistan, though these incidents are hushed up, and the identities of the accused are suppressed when they do not belong to a "particular community," a euphemism used by the Indian media for Muslims. . . .

215. Yoginder Sikand (2001), *The Indian State and the Madrasa*, No. 2, October, [www.ercwilcom.net](http://www.ercwilcom.net).

216. "Crusade against Madrasas in India", Editorial: 1-15 June 2002, *The Milli Gazette*, New Delhi.



Dark days lie ahead, not just for Indian Muslims, but also for the entire Indian state if it succumbs to the unfounded paranoia of saffronite zealots who are converting phobias into state policy. It is a wake-up call for Indian Muslims.<sup>217</sup>

Madrasas are looked upon as centres of fundamentalism and also now generally dubbed as centres of ISI activities. This is, to say the least, highly politically motivated. It is highly regrettable that L.K. Advani announced that madrasa education is a security risk. Advani and his intelligence services should know better. There may be a few black sheep but such sweeping statements are very dangerous and amount to condemning whole community. Those, which indulge in such activities should be isolated and punished under the law of the land.<sup>218</sup>

#### Madrasas on Indo-Bangladesh Border

In the meantime some hardliners blame madrasas of being dens of terrorism the other politicians and administration people with what madrasas do. Though those who lead this anti-madrasa campaign do not have even a thread of evidence along with Home Minister admitting on the Floor of the House that so far he had not come across any proof that madrasas were involved in anti-national activity. The Congress MP Santosh Mohan Dev pointed out that 40 percent of the population in his Parliamentary constituency, Silcher, in Assam was Muslim and that he had asked the Home minister whether there was any ISI activity there and had been given a reply in negative. "So is this just propaganda and are you trying to create smoke screen?" he asked. On

217. Paranoia as State Policy: Indian Muslims Branded, *Internal Security Risk*, [www.guidedones.com/issues/regions/India](http://www.guidedones.com/issues/regions/India).

218. Asghar Ali Engineer, "Muslims and Education", *Secular Perspective*, 1st to 15th August, 2001.

the same day K. Yerranna, TDP's Parliamentary party leader in Lok Sabha who had asked original question also quizzed the minister on the fact that most of the sub-questions he had asked on an alleged survey, its contents and on sponsors of these madrasas had all been answered in 'no'.<sup>219</sup>

Interesting thing is that the border madrasas are considered to be the most dangerous and the government who accuses madrasas has no proof and yet has conducted no survey. After the madrasas of northeast, India let us have a look on a report that throws light on madrasas that are on West Bengal border with Bangladesh. After attack on American Centre in Kolkata, the Chief Minister of West Bengal Buddhadev Bhattacharya gave all the madrasas modernization call that was connected with the attack by some section of media, later Buddhadev himself clarified:

Buddhaden Bhattacharya on Tuesday denied having said that anti-national activities were going on in certain unrecognized madrasas in the state. The Chief Minister said his government has never received reports about madrasas being involved in anti-national activities. In recent times, we have arrested several people suspected of being involved in the Khadim chief abduction case and the terrorist attack on the American Centre. But not one of them is even remotely connected with madrasas. He said, adding, that modernization of madrasas education and terrorism were two separate issues.<sup>220</sup>

This is the case with madrasas on Indo-Bangladesh border. Politicians who are directly in touch with those madrasas are denying their any relation with Pakistan's ISI, but those who are in centre make foul remarks against educational institutions.

219. Kashmir Madrasas have not produced a single terrorist, *Milli Gazette*, 26 August, 2002.

220. *The Times of India*, March 2002.

### Madrasas on Indo-Nepal & Indo-Pak Border

There are more hues and cries about the madrasas that have come up in recent past on Indo-Nepal border. The then Minister of State for Home Vidyasagar Rao, even in parliament raised the issue. He expressed regarding foreign funds that flow to these madrasas. Minister of State for Home Vidyasagar Rao said in Parliament on 19 March that the government is thinking of enacting a new law to 'check foreign contributions and their utilization by madrasas and other organizations'. In the same speech he conceded that the government has not yet carried out any survey on foreign funding to these institutions in the border areas of the country.<sup>221</sup>

The Milli Gazette sent a team to inquire these madrasas and find out facts. The team found that there is nothing on ground that may be a cause of concern for the government. *The Milli Gazette*, which sent a team to inspect several of the madrasas along the Nepal-India border being monitored by the police, reported that none of the dozen Muslim seminaries that the team visited had any association whatsoever with the ISI. In not one of these madrasas was any sort of physical instruction, leave alone military training, being imparted. The report adds that these madrasas have no history of provoking Hindu-Muslim conflict. In fact, one of them had several Hindu students and teachers on its rolls, while another had several regular Hindu donors.<sup>222</sup>

The authorities in UP and Rajasthan governments have also categorically denied madrasas having been centres of ISI and anti-national activities. It means that madrasas on Indo-Nepal and Indo-Pak border are free antinational and anti social activities and designs. It is basically the strategy of anti-Muslim of elements to spread propaganda and their

prejudices for grabbing power and to exploit the emotions of common people, particularly the majority community. Official sources have so far failed to name the madrasas involved in ISI activities. Politicians, like the former UP chief minister, Ram Prakash Gupta, have not come out with anything concrete. The state's Director General of Police (DGP), Sriram Arun, while asserting that the ISI was active along the Indo-Nepal border, is said to have denied that madrasas were being used as hideouts. Likewise, the DGP of Rajasthan admitted that madrasas near the border areas are "neither centres of ISI nor have they ever participated till date in any anti-national activities." Clearly, the madrasas are being made to bear the brunt of a propaganda exercise.<sup>223</sup>

What can be joke bigger than this below-mentioned with the national security and harmony as it is narrated by a respected member of our Parliament from the Home Secretary: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, on 24 April, sought "strict action against religious fundamentalist institutions which have come up in the country, particularly along India-Nepal border, with the help of Pakistan ISI for indoctrinating young minds to wage holy war against India". During the meetings of this very committee, G.M. Banatwala, MP, as he disclosed in our previous issue, pressed for information on the border madrasas only to be told by the Home Secretary that when they talk about such madrasas they mean the madrasas on the other side of the border, that is in Nepal.<sup>224</sup>

### Madrasas in Kashmir

Kashmir, for a long time, has been witnessing militancy all across the state. If the madrasas would have been involved in anti-national activities it would have not been a matter of

221. "Crusade against Madrasas in India", Editorial: 1-15 June 2002, *The Milli Gazette*, New Delhi.

222. Yoginder Sikand (2001), *The Indian State and the Madrasa*, No. 2, October, [www.ercwilcom.net](http://www.ercwilcom.net).

223. Yoginder Sikand (2001), *The Indian State and the Madrasa*, No. 2, October, [www.ercwilcom.net](http://www.ercwilcom.net).

224. "Crusade against Madrasas in India", Editorial: 1-15 June 2002, *The Milli Gazette*, New Delhi.



surprise, but, here madrasas in Jammu and Kashmir have mirrored their positive role in building the society and refrained from joining the eviltants and separatists movements and activities. K. Rajendra, Inspector General of Police, Jammu and Kashmir, says that madrasas have never been indulged in ongoing militancy. K. Rajendra, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, says we have no objection to the madrasa functioning in the state and goes on to admit that, 'we have never caught any militant with a madrasa background.' He goes on to say 'they are unlike the madrasas in Pakistan which have become jihadi factories.' Rajendra's colleague and state DIG, S. P. Vaid echoes the same when he says that Kashmiri madrasas have not produced a terrorist. 'Ninety percent militants in Kashmir are illiterate. Madrasas have played no role in militancy. They have never produced a terrorist', admits Vaid. Rajendra says, 'these madrasas may turn out strong believers in religion, even a fundamentalist. But they have never produced a militant.' The state government would have dismantled these madrasas long ago had they been supportive of militancy in the state. The Army had asked madrasa chiefs to fill a form that asked for madrasa name, motive, area, sect, political belief, means of funding and elaborate staff statement. No evidence was found by these security agencies that could point towards the involvement of madrasas in spreading militancy. From the time in late eighties when the militancy first reared its head in the Valley these institutions have distanced themselves from religious extremism solely focusing on the religious studies, the inquiry found out. It was revealed by the investigators that these religious institutions have never issued any fatwa for jihad in the state nor approved militancy. Though it was found out that they have not denounced the militancy either.<sup>225</sup>

225. "Kashmir madrasas have not produced a single terrorist", *Milli Gazette* 26 August, 2002. [www.mag.com](http://www.mag.com), **American Madrasas and The Glee of Doing Evil.**

But this open admission will not prompt the government to desist from its anti-madrasa stand. The Home Minister L.K. Advani has been accusing that madrasas are involved in anti-national activities and have been collaborating with the ISI. It is notwithstanding the fact that several police chiefs in different states have admitted that no madrasa in their respective states is involved in any such activity.

### Madrasas and Media

The media, as important it is, also gave a push to these rumours floating in air. Not only the Indian media but also the international media is also busy in maligning the madrasas either in Pakistan, India or elsewhere. There are many examples of irresponsible journalism we have just come across about madrasas, as if the writer is deliberately attacking them or is misguided by someone. One of the more disturbing things we've learned about is: the very real network of hundreds, maybe even thousands of "Madrasas," or "Koran Schools." These are brainwashing centres in which mostly Arab boys are trained in the ways of hate and terror. Rather than providing them with marketable skills, the various Imams, Ayatollahs, and Mullahs teach young students the ins and outs of hating America, hating science and industry and International Capitalism. Inevitably, these young people come to see their own lives as bleak and expendable in the greater cause, better spent retrieving the lost Golden Age of classical Arabia by killing Infidels rather than meekly accepting a future where Islam has withered away into history, replaced by global, Western-style secular technological prosperity. Thousands of angry, hateful, indoctrinated students swarming like locusts, looking for any opportunity to destroy their enemies. Now that's really spooky. If the American corporate business community wants to survive, it must never employ the graduates of today's American Madrasas.<sup>226</sup>

226. "American Madrasas and The Glee of Doing Evil", [www.mag.com](http://www.mag.com).

"The syllabus for these madrasas (in Pakistan) has originated in India, in Uttar Pradesh. More importantly from Deoband in the state, which has nurtured Deobandi Islam. The Deobandis have been consistently working to remove each and every little pre-Islamic habit in converts to the religion, particularly habits which linked and reminded them of past. This they have accomplished by issuing fatwas, or religious edicts, asking Muslims to give up links with the kafirs. This process is continuous, as writer V.S. Naipaul says in his famous book *Beyond Faith*. It continues till the convert is made to forget his past, his history and his forefathers. And till an unbridgeable divide is created between the converts and their mother society. For the hardware of terrorism, the software is from Deoband. . . . Pakistan has realized this (danger from Deobandi madrasas), but late. It has already started to pay the costs. Perhaps we too will start paying a higher cost in the near future.<sup>227</sup>

Reading this type of remarks it seems that those who write such things they have never studied the histories of madrasas particularly Darul Uloom Deoband which has a bright history of pluralism and composite nationalism.

It was the first to give a different definition of watan (nation). Iqbal and Jinnah said that the concept was based on religion and made it a plank for the creation of Pakistan. Deoband said watan could only be defined as a sense of belonging, and argued for a plural India, opposing partition tooth and nail. But today it is being labeled as a spiritual leader of the Taliban and an agency of the ISI. It is very painful.<sup>228</sup>

227. S. Gurumurthy (2000), "Nursing Hatred", *The Indian Express*, Mumbai, 11 May.

228. Maulana Wahiddudin Khan (2001), "Deobandis are redundant", Interview, *The Week*, July 1.

This association has proved deeply embarrassing for Deoband, which actually has an illustrious history. Historian Mushirul Hasan points out that the Deobandis arose in British India not as a reactionary but a forward-looking movement to unite and reform Muslim society in the wake of the oppression the community faced after the 1857 revolt. Hasan stresses: "The Deobandis opposed partition, rejected the two nation theory and strongly supported the nationalist movement led by the Congress. It is sacrilege to label them as anti-national."<sup>229</sup>

On April 14, 2002 fraudulent report, "Funds and Fundamentalism" in the Delhi newspaper *The Pioneer* about the allegedly growing number of militant Muslim organizations and their direct link to the "mushrooming" growth of madrasas in North East is an example how media invents, diffuses and sustains the negative stereotype of madrasas as the breeding ground for terrorism. A masked gunman (intended to portray a Muslim terrorist), a map outlining the sinister Muslim presence with a "Terror Trail" box, all to create a negative image of Muslims in North East. The *Pioneer* reported that madrasas in the area are trying to create a Muslim state. *The Milli Gazette* sent a team to investigate. They talked to relevant people in the police, intelligence madrasas and the Muslim community and reported back. The report revealed that *the Pioneer's* report was quite baseless:

- *The Pioneer* says, last July AMMMA got a donation of \$45,000.
- The fact is that no such organization ever existed in Manipur.
- *The Pioneer* says Muslim militancy is growing in the North East.

229. Saba Naqvi Bhaumik (2001), "Old-School Ties", *Outlook*, New Delhi, 31 December.



- The fact is that there is no Muslim militancy in the area, the largest outfit being Ulfa (*The Hindu*) and NSCN-IM (Christian).
- *The Pioneer* says that Muslim separatism is growing in the area.
- The fact is Christian, tribal and Hindu separatism is more apparent.
- *The Pioneer* says Muslims' anti-national activities have rang alarm bells in Manipur police establishments.
- The fact is no alarm bells rang because nothing is there in among Manipur Muslims to warrant it.
- *The Pioneer* says there is an SIO office in Imphal's Paona Bazaar.
- There is no SIO presence in entire Manipur, let alone Paona Bazaar. In any case SIO is not a militant outfit.<sup>230</sup>

Unfortunately, the distortions were perpetrated on two levels for purposes that coincided. The myths about madrasa were spread globally in the wake of developments in Afghanistan. This fallacious version shows madrasa as the breeding ground of 'terrorism' where terrorists are trained and exported everywhere. This diabolical piece of 'global strategy' came in handy for those in our country who stand for one language and one culture for the nation. They are fueling the fire that may consume the goodwill that exists between various communities and reduce the cultural unity to ashes. It is in the best interests of the country to see madrasas in their true perspective. This is urgently necessary, as the Government machinery has been activated to look into madrasa affairs. It should be welcomed if things move in positive direction, but it is highly doubtful as the bureaucracy, the implementing machinery, vitiates even

230. "The Pioneer's Invention regarding North-East Madrasas", *Milli Gazette*, New Delhi, 1-15 August, 2002.

good intentioned decisions. The irony is that in free India those Ulama and their followers and successors are looked upon with contempt and condemned as collaborators in the act of partition. Alas! As a reward for their sacrifices for the cause of freedom their luck was to receive brickbats — both before and after independence. Moreover, madrasas developed in the best of traditions are stigmatized, vandals are let loose against them at the behest of malicious instigators and the ill-informed and myopic media fans the fire. In fact, it is a peculiar situation where national and international factors have come to interplay.<sup>231</sup>

### Madrasas Can Play Peace Role

Keeping in view the important role of madrasas in national movements and freedom struggle, there is no doubt that madrasas are a part of India's heritage. They have been vital centres from where great leaders and movements emerged. They are not only well known but also respected all over Islamic world for their invaluable contributions to Islamic works. So it is quite natural to think of madrasas' role in these present turbulent times. This idea comes in minds of the people that the Government of India, instead of maligning the madrasas should utilize them to strengthen its relations with Islamic countries. "Instead of targeting the madrasas as potential sources of instability, a sensible Government of India could have used them, firstly, to improve education among the dejected Muslim classes. Further, the madrasas could even be used to help improve India's relations with Muslim countries and even to help influence the policies of countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan towards India. If the state had sought to work in tandem with these madrasas, instead of increasingly

231. Rizwan Ullah (2000), "Floodlights on Madrasas", 19 June, *Milli Gazette*, Delhi.

alienating them, they could even serve important foreign policy goals by helping to combat the radical appeal of the jihadist elements within Pakistan, while assuaging Muslim fears of a threat to their identity and their religious freedom in India. Indian madrasas, such as the Darul Uloom at Deoband, the Mazahir-ul 'Uloom at Saharanpur and the Nadwat-ul Ulama at Lucknow, are widely respected all over the Muslim world. The Deoband School, in fact, is the largest madrasa in the whole of Asia and the second largest in the world. Many Muslims in neighbouring Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh follow the precepts established by these madrasas.<sup>232</sup> A Hyderabad-based Muslim scholar has said that instead of accusing Islamic religious schools of fostering terrorism, the Indian government should take their assistance in promoting peace in the country. Mohammed Khaja Sharif, a senior faculty member of Jamia Nizamia, a prominent Islamic institution in Hyderabad, said religious schools could actually help curb terrorism as Islam espouses peace and harmony with people of other religions. These religious schools or madrasas develop "character" in students and teach them to live amicably: Sharif told the Saudi Gazette during a visit to Jeddah to perform Umrah and pray at the Prophet's mosque in Madina Sharif said people are welcome to see for themselves what is taught in the madrasas and then one would realize that they are not promoting terrorism.<sup>233</sup>

Balraj Puri, from other point of view, advises madrasa people to be an enthusiastic participants in the historic role of Indian nation and save Islam from misuse by Taliban.

The Deoband authorities for their part must do some serious rethinking on the pivotal role they could play in

232. Yoginder Sikand (2001), *The Indian State and the Madrasa*, No. 2, October, [www.ercwilcom.net](http://www.ercwilcom.net).

233. *The Kashmir Times*, 29 August, 2002.

saving Islam from misuse by the Taliban. Perhaps Deoband is still in a position to help de-Talibanise the Pushtoons. Deoband is not merely an Islamic institution. Its status and role as a premier national institution needs to be recognized as well. It may help India to carve out a special role in the present international efforts to combat terrorism. Its commitment to democracy and its pluralist civilizational background with the second largest Muslim population in the world uniquely equips it to try and prevent the current clash between a clutch of Muslim fanatics and the western democracies from degeneration into a "clash of civilizations". Indian Muslims, who as Sufis, Ulama and intellectuals, have made a notable contribution to creative evolution of Islamic thought, should obviously be enthusiastic participants in this historic role of Indian nation and thereby get more closely integrated with it.<sup>234</sup>

In fact, madrasas in India have always been making efforts, in their limit financial and other capacities, to educate their candidates, besides making few public statements occasionally, for their Islamic obligations to all the people, irrespective of religions, regarding the concept of neighbourhood virtues, charity, honesty, sincerity and other services to the human kind. It is, however a tragic reality that neither the governmental agencies nor the mainstream media sections, nor the Indian educational system recognised the sacrifices of madrasas and their contributions to this blessed country.

#### Difference Between Indian and Pakistani Madrasas

It is also a matter of great concern that the international community and media drags Indian madrasas into terrorism issue whereas there is no evidence that they have ever been

234. Balraj Puri, "Deoband to Taliban: Fall of one Symbol of Nationalism", *The Times of India*.



involved. The biggest proof of Indian madrasas' being impartial is that there was not even a single person from Indian madrasas who have been a member of Al-Qaeda or Taliban. As it is said that the Al-Qaeda and Taliban had members from Arab, African countries, China, Indonesia even USA, UK and other western countries, but there was not any one from Indian Muslims. It clearly indicates that Indian madrasas are different from what is called by the people in power today. The madrasa movement in India was started after 1857 just for purposes; to produce freedom fighters and to impart Islamic education in order to protect the cultural and religious identity of Muslims. After independence, these madrasas became self-centered and even many Ulama who actively participated in freedom distanced themselves from learning and teaching British system of education. When one purpose of madrasas was achieved they busied them in to their main work. But, as far as matter of madrasas in neighbouring Muslim countries, they may be having some other agenda as per the conditions of their own country. Barbara D. Metcalf, a Professor in Department of History at the University of California and researcher on Darul Uloom Deoband and Tabligi Jamat, sees no truth in what is propagated about the madrasas possible link with fundamentalists and terrorists outside the country. Here she talks to Yoginder Sikand:

**Q:** How would you distinguish between the Indian and the Pakistani madrasas on questions related to security and 'terrorism'?

**A:** I think that it is unfortunate to link the two countries. As far as I know, no one has ever identified Indian madrasa linked to terrorist activity whereas in Pakistan there is a case to be made.<sup>235</sup>

235. Barbara D. Metcalf, "No Indian madrasah has been linked to terror", Interview, *Milli Gazette website*.

There are many who share the same idea. For example:

Many madrasas in Pakistan, for instance, have emerged as breeding grounds for self-styled jihadists, including the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Lashkar-i-Tayyeba which wants to emancipate Kashmir. It appears that the experience of madrasas in Pakistan has fuelled the fear of madrasas in India, but clearly such a fear is misplaced, as there is no evidence of Indian madrasas being actually involved in similar activities.<sup>236</sup>

Indian madrasas have nothing to do with madrasas in Pakistan or elsewhere. It is painful to see reports about some Indians madrasas indulging in activities harmful to the country. It is a pity that madrasas are being maligned as abodes of obscurantism and refuges of terrorists. This is due to lack of awareness about the system coupled with uninformed bias. Part of the reason is the absence of meaningful interaction between the madrasas and the outside world.<sup>237</sup>

But are madrasas terror factories as it made out to be? On the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, it has conclusively proved that madrasas contributed to the growth of fundamentalism and provided the bulk of the manpower for Taliban. But there is no evidence that this has happened in India though intelligence reports warn of suspect organizations financing madrasas on the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bangladesh border.<sup>238</sup>

One point needs to be emphasized here is that there is little or no similarity between the madrasas of India with that of Pakistan & Afghanistan. The aim and role of Madrasas

236. Yoginder Sikand (2001), *The Indian State and the Madrasa*, No. 2, October, [www.ercwilcom.net](http://www.ercwilcom.net).

237. Qamruddin (2002), "Modernizing Madrasas", *The Times of India*, 8 July, National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi.

238. Saba Naqvi Bhaumik (2001), "Old-School Ties" *Outlook*, 31 December, New Delhi.

in India is to safeguard and sustain their Islamic identity in pluralist culture of India. On the contrary, Madrasas in Pakistan have become breeding grounds of extremists and terrorists and produced Taliban who captured state power in Afghanistan. They threatened the entire humanity and ultimately led to the destruction of their own country.<sup>239</sup>

After all, the authorities at Darul Uloom Deoband, the oldest and pioneer of all, have announced that it was not having any kind of relation with the so-called terrorists and fundamentalists:

"The Darul Uloom clearly said on 19 June that elements promoting or abetting violence and terrorism against Islamic teachings cannot be Deobandis and this institution has nothing to do with such people or institutions. Darul Uloom Deoband took this hard decision in view of the fact that many institutions or persons belonging to madrasas of Kashmir and Pakistan are indulging in aggressive activities against India in the name of 'Deobandism'. This was announced by Maulana Marghoobur Rahman, rector of Darul Uloom Deoband."<sup>240</sup>

Madrasas, especially Darul Uloom Deoband, previously had many students from outside India including a good number from Afghanistan, but long before the Central Government denied giving visa to them. This is why now there is not even a single student from Afghanistan or Pakistan.

#### Lack of Information

A question arises here why do the media project madrasas in bad light. A great deal of suspicion about madrasas stems

239. Fahimuddin, *Globalization and Growth of Madrasas in India*, [www.bsos.com](http://www.bsos.com).

240. "Deoband excommunicates believers in violence", 7 September 2002, *Milli Gazette*, Delhi.

from the fact that the average Indian has no clue about what is taught in these institutions.<sup>241</sup> Most critics of the madrasas have probably never visited a madrasa, and so much of what is said is pure hearsay.<sup>242</sup>

This is the main problem that people in the government and others, who comment on madrasas, most of them do not have basic knowledge about the madrasas. This is the point where the madrasa people also went wrong. They have become so self-centered that they even do not try to introduce what they do in madrasas to their neighbouring community i.e. Hindus, Sikhs and others. Not to speak of only non-Muslim brothers but the modern educated and intellectual class of Muslim community also does not know much about what is taught in madrasas and what is their relevance in modern times. It is high time for madrasas not to remain distant from the different classes of people in India. Of course madrasas should not be a stage for politicians but the elite part of our country in every field should not be ignorant of them also.

#### Rise in Madrasas Numbers

There has been more noise regarding the growing number of madrasas in the country especially on the border areas with Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh borders. Some put the figures on 35-40 thousand madrasas beside maktabas which are considered to be nearly one hundred thousands. So far no survey of madrasas all over India has been conducted that may provide an accurate figure of these institutes. Recently, Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi, arranged a survey that covered nearly all important and old madrasas of the country. But the number of these madrasas is extremely

241. Saba Naqvi Bhaumik (2001), "Old-School Ties", *Outlook*, New Delhi, 31 December.

242. Yoginder Sikand (2001), *The Indian State and the Madrasa*, No. 2, October.



low, only 700. No doubt, the eightieth decade witnessed a rapid progress in the number of madrasas, but the rise in madrasas is directly proportional to the rise in the Muslim population. But the number of madrasas is not as much as the government, some media and other anti-Muslim organizations say. According to reports of some section of media which surveyed the area on Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bangladesh borders, find the number of madrasas in hundreds:

There are 343 mosques and 384 madrasas on the Indian side of the Indo-Nepal border and 291 mosques and 195 madrasas on the Nepal side. The last five years saw 73 new mosques and 89 madrasas coming up in Siddharthnagar, Maharajganj, West Champaran, East Champaran, Sitamarhi, Madhubani and Araria in India while on the Nepal side, 45 mosques and 41 madrasas have sprung up in 10 border districts. The situation is no different on the Indo-Bangladesh border. There are 955 mosques and 445 madrasas in the border districts of the northeastern states. On the Bangladesh side, there are 976 mosques and 156 madrasas in 28 districts. In the last 5 years, 57 mosques and 88 madrasas have come up in West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. Most of them are reportedly being funded by the Gulf-based NGO, Rabita Alam-e-Islami.<sup>243</sup>

This is the case with the most sensitive parts of the country while the madrasas in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Punjab borders with Pakistan do not find any mention in the report that obviously have much lesser numbers. So it is only madrasa phobia that is created about their number for some secret motives.

243. Kartikeya Sharma, (2002), "Blind Faith" *The Week*, 24 February.

### Foreign Funds

For their finances madrasas depend upon either of the following two sources: (a) common public donations, (b) government-aided madrasas that may be fully or partly aided. Deoband Madrasa is an example of the first kind while Madrasa Alia of Calcutta and Madrasa Shamsul Huda of Patna and many others are the examples of the second kind. A third source of finance is also available under FCRA. Such finances from foreign countries are made available for the development of autonomous madrasas both in terms of infrastructures as well as course developments. This kind of financial assistance has become a source of hallucination for people who view things with coloured glasses. The government is putting question mark over the funding of these madrasas too. Earlier this year too the BJP government at the centre found itself in a spot during question hour on 19 March when it could not give any firm reply on foreign funding of madrasas in border areas. Minister of state for Home Vidyasagar Rao had to admit that the government had not conducted any survey to assess whether or how many madrasas were ISI inspired. Basically, the madrasas for 150 years are run by charities that Muslims pay annually. There is a baseless phobia that foreign cash is flowing into madrasas:

(Sayyid Hamid, former VC of AMU stresses that surveys have shown that madrasas are run out of zakat (charity) collected from within the country. Yet there is unnecessary phobia about foreign money flowing in from Middle East. Even the media contributes to this false propaganda."<sup>244</sup>

Yes, now some madrasa people have access to foreign countries and get some money there also. But the fact is

244. Saba Naqvi Bhaumik (2001), "Old-School Ties", *Outlook*, 31 December, New Delhi.

that the majority of madrasas depend on local donations. But it is not objectionable to take foreign help as it is within the Constitution. Every foreign donation comes through the channel of Home Ministry. It reaches in the hands of the madrasa people only when it is given clearance from the concerning ministry under FCRA. After all, if the Muslims get donations from the foreign Muslims, other Hindu, Christian and Sikh organizations also receive funds from foreign countries. Former cabinet secretary Zafar Saifullah asked: "Do not Christian and Hindu institutions get funds from abroad? It has been proven that much of the VHP finances come from outside India. In any case, all foreign donations have to get an FCRA clearance." Saifullah in fact sees the "demonization of madrasas as part of the overall tactic of discrediting the minority community." After all he points out "Sangh Privar ideologues make no secret of the fact that they are waging a war against Marx, Macauley and madrasas."<sup>245</sup>

Not only had Home Minister L.K. Advani resolved to crackdown on illegal madrasas which have mushroomed in the last five years, but there are also considerations in West Bengal of a shut-down on madrasa education. There is a general phobia in India about funds flowing in from the Middle East into the madrasas there, particularly those on the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bangladesh borders. However, Muslims point out, there seems to be no scruples about foreign funds for Christian and Hindu institutions.<sup>246</sup>

### Change Hindu Schools First

Finally, let me divert your attention towards what is taught there in Hindu schools. According to Hindu fanatics the

245. Saba Naqvi Bhaumik (2001), "Old-School Ties", *Outlook*, 31 December, New Delhi.

246. Salahuddin Babar, *Madrasas: In Focus*, [www.bccbd.org](http://www.bccbd.org).

madrasas spread hatred and teach to kill infidels. Though it is far from truth. But, don't they look at the syllabus of their own schools. The BJP-led alliance in the Centre tried to saffronize the curricula of schools and distort the history. The religious education that is imparted in RSS and VHP schools is communally inflammatory. Many, from India and abroad, feel the heat. Barbara D. Metcalf says:

As for India, there have been inappropriately inflammatory comments by right-wing politicians about the alleged subversiveness, foreign funding, etc. of madrasah. As Muslims themselves have replied, if there is illegal activity, there are laws that can be applied. There is shockingly little attention given, I might add, to the right-wing teaching inculcated in some Hindu schools.<sup>247</sup>

Saud Aalam Qasmi, Professor of Mythology in Aligarh Muslim University write in one of his articles:

"From the day the Bhartia Janta Party came in to power it tried to communalize the national education that is known as Safronization of education. All the secular parties, individuals and education workers have protested against the effort in their circle and it continues till date. The BJP government was criticized for its changing the national syllabi, appointing communal minded elements on important educational posts and create Hindu environment in colleges. It is seen as an effort to change the secular character of the country. . . . Regarding madrasas as a threat to the national security and demanding changes in to their syllabus and system is actually pre-planned conspiracy to divert the public attention from the main issue (saffronization). If the curricula of schools run by the RSS and VHP and affiliated to Shishu Mandir, Bal Mandir and Vidya

247. Barbara D. Metcalf, "No Indian Madrasah has been linked to terror," Interview, *Milli Gazette website*.



Board, are compared to those of the Islamic madrasas it will be clear that the Islamic madrasas impart only Islamic education while these schools malign the characters of Muslims and Christians along with Hindu revivalism. Distorting the history they instill hatred and hostility in to the tender minds towards the duo. In this situation it is necessary to restrain the Sangh Parivar schools to human and secular values, and introduce changes into their syllabus instead of madrasas.<sup>248</sup>

The demolition of Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 by Hindu extremists and the record-breaking recent Muslim genocide in Gujarat at their hands under state government sponsorship are examples that show what they are taught and what they harbour in their hearts for Muslims. So, if the government is sincere it should rein in first the schools and institutes run by fascist organizations like RSS and VHP, which promote communal tension and hatred. This is the real threat to national security. It is ironic that the government had given these outfits free hands just because they show them as patriotic. Undoubtedly, such organizations are the biggest challenge and threat to the national security, amity and harmony.

248. Sauood Aalam Qasmi (2002), "Dini Madaris ki Jadidkari", *Inquilab*, 3 July, Mumbai.

## 10

### ROLES OF MADRASAS IN VARIOUS FIELDS OF LIFE

Madrasas, not only in Muslim rule but also in British as well as Independent India, have been of great importance and value for both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. They had never been out of mainstream in Islamic and British India. Madrasas played vital role in different fields of society they are also known for their impact on social spheres. They have not distanced them from any matter whether it is related to Muslim community in particular or to the country in general.

#### **Centres to Preserve Islamic Identity**

First of all madrasas helped Indian Muslims to maintain their identity and entity as Muslims. Had there not been madrasas, the Hindu-rooted Indian culture would have assimilated Muslims far before in its folk. But by the grace of madrasas, Muslims not only managed to preserve their Islamic identity but also they influenced the Indian culture and made it a good synthesis Indo-Islamic culture. After the colonial occupation of the English and abolishment of educational institutions, Muslims feared that they would lose their Islamic assets and would either fall prey to Western culture

or merge into majority. This time also, it was madrasa that came to rescue. And now when the wind of globalization is blowing very fast, Muslim community all across the world has no alternative for madrasas and Islamic institutions Manzoor Ahmad says:

The Deeni madaris in India in the last 200 years have played a role, which has no parallel in history. When the British imperialists occupied this country, they drove away the Muslim not only from the seats of political power but also from other areas of influence. The Christian missionaries mounted a ruthless assault on Islam and the Muslim, in the subcontinent. In those turbulent times, the problem of maintaining and deepening the Islamic identity of the recently converted Muslim masses was a formidable task. And this task fell upon the ill-organized and poor Ulama in the country. History bears witness that the Ulama not only checked the inroads being made by the British masters and Christian missionaries in to the cultural life of Muslims but also prepared a generation of freedom fighters.<sup>249</sup>

It is also important to notice this viewpoint: The Indian Muslims were also experiencing serious danger to their faith and culture from the majority Hindu culture, along with the threat of Western culture, a product of globalization. The way out Muslims in India thought was to establish their ancient Islamic institution of Madrasa on large scale for the teachings of Islamic fundamentals. The Madrasas have been considered by the Indian Muslims as Centres to enclave and exclude the Islamic Identity and culture from the colonization by the non-Muslims culture.<sup>250</sup>

249. Manzoor Ahmad, *Islamic Education: Redefinition of Aims and Methodology*, pp. 31-32, Genuine Publications & Media, Delhi.

250. Fahimuddin, *Globalization and Growth of Madrasas in India*, [www.bsos.com](http://www.bsos.com).

This is the reason that intellectuals like Allama Iqbal have said "Let these maktabas as they are. Let the poor Muslims' children study in these madrasas. Had there not been these Mullahs then what would have been, do you know? Whatever will happen I had all seen by my own eyes. If the Indian Muslims are deprived of the influence of these madrasas they will face situation like that of Muslims in Spain where in spite of 800 year Muslim rule one does not find even a trace of Muslims except the monuments of Cordoba, Granada and Al-Hamra. Similarly, In India also we will find a trace of Muslims except Taj Mahal in Agra and Red Fort in Delhi."<sup>251</sup>

### National Affairs

It is needless to mention the great contribution that madrasas have given in the cause of freedom struggle. From 1857 to 1947 they never compromised with the British government and always held the torch of freedom. It is now a known history that madrasa people not only participated enthusiastically in the 1857 resistance but also they led the movements at various places. Reshmi Rumal Tahrik (Silky Handkerchief Movement) was purely an Ulama-based movement. Jamiatul Ulama Hind, which came into being in 1919, was the largest platform for Ulama. It was Jamiatul Ulama Hind that cooperated the nationalist movement of the Congress and inspired the plan of Complete Freedom and non-Cooperation. Later they were madrasa people who opposed the two-nation theory and creation of Pakistan. They also strongly supported the Congress.

Historically too, madrasas have contributed to the national cause. Graduates from the madrasas as well as the founders of some of the leading Muslim seminaries in India played an important role in the struggle against the British, a fact that is conveniently ignored in

251. *Daru Uloom*, Deoband, December 1994.



India's school history textbooks. Prominent Ulama-led uprisings against the British in the 1857 revolt, and, for decades after, the reformist Ulama kept aloft the banner of defiance in the Pathan borderlands till they were forcibly put down by the British. Madrasa teachers and students, such as Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and Maulana Barkatullah Khan Bhopali were among the first Indians to demand complete freedom for India, at a time when Hindu and Muslim communalist groups were supporting the British. It is a fact, lost to those in the Hindutva crusade as well as the larger populace, that most madrasas vehemently opposed the Muslim League and its two-nation theory, insisting on a united India where people of different faiths could live in harmony.<sup>252</sup>

This is also an interesting part of the history of our freedom struggle that madrasa people who are considered poorly educated, less intelligent and forward looking, always opposed every disastrous policy of British government while those who are considered to be intelligent and well-educated were trusted loyal to the aliens.

It is an irony of fate that while the people with western and modern education in the 19th century generally sided with the imperialists and made compromises to accommodate their whims and wishes, the Ulama opposed the policies of British in an uncompromising manner. It is also to be noted that a large number of patriots and leaders who fought for India's independence came from these religious seminaries, while the modern universities produced many collaborators and officials to run the alien government. Those who could recount every detail of the French revolution, and every part of revolutionary literature, failed to understand the

252. Yoginder Sikand (2001), *The Indian State and the Madrasa*, No. 2, October, [www.ercwil.com.net](http://www.ercwil.com.net).

tyrannical nature of imperialism in their own lands. However, those who were termed as half-literate could see the true face of imperialism in the light provided by the Qur'an and Sunnah and confronted it with their entire might. The contribution of the Indian Ulama to the Islamic awakening in other parts of the world has also been considerable and has been freely acknowledged by the scholars of the Muslim world.<sup>253</sup>

### Promotion of Education

Madrasas are the greatest NGOs in the world that promote education among the people. Madrasas and maktabas offer free education, free board and free books while the government of India yet could not managed to provide children with free education.

The tradition of opening madaris with the help of voluntary local assistance for the preservation of our cultural identity in the wake of British aggressiveness spread through the subcontinent. At present there are more than 30,000 such non-governmental educational institutions, spread all over the Indian Union. This is the largest peoples' endeavour, on absolutely voluntary basis, in the field of education in history, any where in the world. These madaris do not accept government aid for the fear of dilution of their character and charter. Their contribution towards mass literacy, theological education and maintenance and deepening of Islamic identity has been incalculable and invaluable. So much has never been achieved in educational history with so little investment as these madaris function with ridiculously low financial resources, collected from the local communities."<sup>254</sup>

253. Manzoor Ahmad, *Islamic Education: Redefinition of Aims and Methodology*, pp. 31-32, Genuine Publications & Media, Delhi.

254. *Ibid.*

There is, of course, no denying the fact that for many Muslims madrasa, education is the alternative to no education. Supported by endowments and charity, madrasas offer much cheaper education than even government schools. Had there not been madrasas, the ratio of literacy in Muslim community would have become even lower and worse:

S.U. Siddiqui, argues that at the primary school level, Muslim literacy figures are on par with other communities largely because of the access to these schools where children get free food along with education. It is at the middle and high school level that dropout figures become distressingly high. Sayyid Hamid too believes that with the government school system in shambles, madrasas are often the only avenue open to the economically backward members of this minority community. "As it is, literacy figures for Muslims are far lower than the national average. Without madrasas they would be even lower,"<sup>255</sup>

For many poor families, madrasas are the only source of education for their children, since they charge no fees and provide free boarding and lodging to their students. Given what is said to be the dismal level of Muslim access to education, and the anti-Muslim bias that has been incorporated into the curricula of government schools, madrasas are often the only available educational option for children from poor Muslim families. Madrasas have thus been playing an important role in promoting literacy among the Muslims, who have the distinction of being, the least educated and deprived community in India.<sup>256</sup>

255. Saba Naqvi Bhaumik (2001), "Old-School Ties", *Outlook*, 31 December, New Delhi.

256. Yoginder Sikand (2001), *The Indian State and the Madrasa*, No. 2, October.

### Literary and Academic Works

Here is a report from neighbouring Pakistani madrasas that tells us something about the importance and energy that madrasa people have regarding academic works:

In the past 50 years the people related to Arabic and Islamiyat faculties of universities in Pakistan have written about one thousand books, 70 per cent of them are in Urdu and are of no value. On the contrary, the people of madrasas that are run without any help from the government they have written nearly 50 thousand books in Arabic, Persian, English and Urdu. These Ulama who hardly meet with need of their necessities have carried out academic works which is thousand times better than the teachers who get all facilities.<sup>257</sup>

The situation is not much different in India also. It is the people of madrasas who have translated and wrote all Islamic teachings and books in Urdu. As a result, Urdu became the richest literature of Islam after Arabic and Persian. Now if a Urdu knowing student does not know Arabic, it does not matter at all, since he can avail substitute Urdu books. There are thousands of valuable books that were written by scholars of madrasas. And their countless works in Arabic and Persian also in such a high standard that scholars from Islamic world appreciate and admire:

Madrasas in India evolved and achieved such a great eminence that Muslim countries of Asia and Africa, virtually the entire Arab world, looked towards them for inspiration and guidance in teaching and practice of religion. Eminent Indian teachers have been held in high regard by scholars in the Islamic world. Not only that, chapters from the curricula of our madrasas were

257. Ibnul Hasan Abbasi, 'Wujoyd', Karachi, Vol. 2, No. 16; *Dini Madaris: Mazi, Hal, Mustaqbil*, p. 51.



adopted by the institutions of higher learning in Muslim countries.<sup>258</sup>

The contribution of the Indian Ulama to the Islamic awakening in other parts of the world has also been considerable and has been freely acknowledged by the scholars of the Muslim world.<sup>259</sup>

### Muslim Leadership

In Pakistan and Afghanistan, madrasas today play a crucial role in national politics. Pakistan has several 'Ulama-based political parties with millions of supporters. The recent alliance of six religious parties Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) in Pakistan broke the previous records of victory in election. It got comfortable majority in North West Frontier Province (NWFR) and headed a coalition government in Baluchistan while it secured 45 National Assembly seats all across the country. The Taliban regime in neighbouring Afghanistan was entirely Ulama-based, products of madrasas in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. In India, the Ulama and their madrasas wield less direct political influence. Nevertheless, there are few Ulama active in Indian politics. Ulama, however, exercise an enormous influence on Muslim public opinion. The massive agitations that India witnessed against what was seen to be an attack on Muslim Personal Law in the 1980s were led principally by the Ulama. The Muslim Personal Law Board, which is considered to be the key body of the Indian Muslims to deliberate on shariat matters, is also largely in the hands of madrasa leaders. Recently the Uttar Pradesh government introduced a Religious Building Bill, in which it was prohibited to build any religious building and hold

258. Rizwan Ullah (2002), "Floodlights on Madrasas", *Milli Gazette*, 19 June, Delhi.

259. Manzoor Ahmad, *Islamic Education: Redefinition of Aims and Methodology*, pp. 31-32, Genuine Publications & Media, Delhi.

religious meeting without prior permission of the district administration. Muslim organizations, especially Jamiatul Ulama Hind, called rallies against the bill in Lucknow and Delhi; the Delhi rally is estimated to have had one million audiences who filled Ram Lila Ground for the first time after independence. Undoubtedly madrasas enjoy enormous support of Muslim masses more than every party and organization.

### Role of Madrasas in other Countries

Pakistan's madrasas also offered free board, accommodation and education for hundreds of thousands of local children, mainly boys, from poor families who could not otherwise afford to send their sons to school in a country with a weak public education system. Notably, the madrasas of Pakistan also do not accept any grant from the government and independently run them with the help of charities from Muslim masses. According to Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf in an interview with CNN:

Actually those who know what is going on in Madrasas would support this point that I'm going to tell you, that this is the biggest welfare organization anywhere in the world is operated today. About 600,000 to 700,000 children of the poor get free board and lodge, and they get free education.<sup>260</sup>

"The madrasas unthinkably give free education, training, lodging and food to 17,00,000 students of the country. On the contrary, the government schools educate only 16,00,000 after spending huge amounts that go beyond billions of rupees. They do neither offer free education nor free lodge and food. The products of government institutions are useless in practical life. Having spent

260. Kashif Iqbal Buttar, *Madrasa Schools in Pakistan*, p. 299, Lynn Leonard, Amanpour.

billions of rupees the government supplies a generation of unemployed youths every year."<sup>261</sup>

Likewise, madrasas in Bangladesh and Indonesia also provide education to a large number of children that the local government may not be able to provide, especially free of cost:

"Muslim scholars in Bangladesh share a similar sentiment. There is no doubt that the madrasas are the main source of education for a large number of children in the country. These institutions exist in remote villages, even where neither formal nor non-formal education has reached. Education under this system is free."<sup>262</sup>

"Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, has many thousands of religious schools, including boarding schools known as *pesantrens*. These schools have come to play an even more important role in national education in the past few years as an economic slump and shortage of government funds have undermined the public school system."<sup>263</sup>

261. Ibnul Hasan Abbasi (2001), *Wujood*, Vol. 2, No. 16, Karachi; *Dini Madaris*, pp. 54-55, Deoband.

262. *Madrasas: In Focus*, [www.bccbd.org](http://www.bccbd.org).

263. Michael Richardson (2002), "Asians take a closer look at Islamic schools", *International Herald Tribune*, 12 February.

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'Madrasa Education: Its Strength and Weakness' is a brilliant work done on the subject. As the book deals with the history of madrasas through ages it discusses the burning issues like fundamentalism, terrorism, syllabus and curricula of madrasas. The author being a madrasa product himself was duly able to present the reality. This is, undoubtedly, a tremendous effort of the young author that beckons a brighter future for him. The book shall stand out to be a new kind of vision throwing light on madrasas from a different angle.

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